SUNDAY MAGAZINE

Ai Ai delas Alas
has got what it takes to take on 2007: A new movie, a new house, a new CD, a new commercial, 5 almost new cars, possibly a new business

SUNDAY BIZ / B1

There's quality of life
beyond the office. New Avon GM from Britain aims to achieve work/ home/ leisure/ exercise balance among his Filipino employees.

SPORTS / A23

BAP fires Jinggoy
Estrada as president for failure to consult board on his agreement forged with Manny Pangilinan.

ENTERTAINMENT / D1

Tony and Larry were no help when
Lea Salonga, all of 8 months pregnant, auditioned for the role of Fantine in "Les Miserables." Already, Lea has won Tony and the (Laurence) Olivier awards, Broadway's and the West End's Oscars.

No pork in a barrel served at Mikey's bar

By Fe Zamora

THIS RESTAURANT DOESN'T SERVE PIGS IN A blanket or in a barrel, just Kapampangan dishes certified authentic by its owner, Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo.

The establishment, called "Mikey's Bar and Grill," is a popular hangout of congressmen looking for good food, cold beer and luck at the

NO PORK/ A8

THE PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER Sunday
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Sunday, January 7, 2007 ★★ 7 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 30 P18 website: inquirer.net

And now, first diet drug for fat dogs

WASHINGTON—IS YOUR hound round? Too much flab on your Lab? Is your husky, well, husky? A new drug may provide some help.

The US government approved the first drug

AND NOW/ A8

Vocal VFA exec resigns

I stood my ground, says usec who hit Palace on Smith transfer

By Volt Contreras

THE PALACE APPOINTEE WHO did not toe the official line and publicly assailed the controversial transfer of a convicted American Marine back to US custody is quitting his post.

"I stood my ground. I'm leaving government," read a text message sent to the INQUIRER just before noon yesterday by Undersecretary Zosimo Paredes, executive director of the Presidential Commission on the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement (VFACom).

Reached later on the phone, Paredes said that in his meeting Friday with Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, he told his superior that "my further stay in the office is untenable considering that I took a stand diametrically opposed to the administration's."

"I'll just wind down the affairs in the office and by the end of the month I should be ready to go," said Paredes, who had earlier conceded he was risking his post when he criticized the manner by which Malacañang removed Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith, convicted of raping a Filipino woman, from the Makati City Jail and transferred him to the US Embassy past 11 p.m. of Dec. 29 without a court order.

Paredes, now on his third year in the VFACom, said he expected to submit his resignation letter this week.

An influential Palace official said President Macapagal-Arroyo had decided not to abolish the VFACom, as had been suggested by administration Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago.

But Paredes will have to go because the President was annoyed by his action of publicly criticizing Smith's transfer, said the official who asked not to be named for lack of authority to speak about the matter.

The official also said Ms Arroyo was already ticking off the names of possible replacements for Paredes, whose firing would

VOCAL VFA/ A9

RODEL ROTONI

YULETIDE ENDS WITH A BANG: Defending champion Australia takes the spectators "on a slow, melodious ride" before lighting up the sky with the brilliance of its pyro display on the first day of the five-day, 9-country Second World Pyro Olympics at the Mall of Asia esplanade by Manila Bay. The fireworks display reportedly reflect each country's culture. The United Kingdom and Germany will compete today; Denmark and Canada on Jan. 12 and China, Jan. 13. (*Story on Page A17.*)

INQUIRER INSIDE

Where's the beef?
DOJ orders NBI to probe pilferage of about half of P40M worth of smuggled, contaminated meat allegedly by Customs men and believed now being sold in public markets.
NEWS / A2

Who's who in Asia
of 2006: 14 movers and shakers are singled out by the Asia News Network, an alliance of 16 newspapers published in 14 Asian cities.
TALK / A14

Japanese founder
of Nissin food products, Momofuku Ando, inventor of the world's first instant noodles, dies in Tokyo at 96.
WORLD / A21

AFP '07 target: Crush 24 of 52 Red guerrilla fronts

By Dona Pazzibugan

BOLSTERED BY P10 BILLION WORTH of new weapons purchases, the military has set its sights on destroying at least half of 52 known active guerrilla fronts of the communist New People's Army in 2007.

This was the target set by top military officials at their first command conference for the New Year at their Camp Aguinaldo headquarters yesterday.

Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. said the military aims to "neutralize" at least 24 active NPA guerrilla fronts and at least 1,000 rebel armed fighters this year.

"Out of the remaining 100 NPA guerilla fronts, of which 52 are identified to be active, the AFP will prioritize the decimation of at least 24 active guerrilla fronts this year," he said.

In the next three years, the AFP target is to wipe out at least 3,500 NPA rebels, which would cut by half the NPA's estimated strength of 7,100 armed fighters.

"By that time we would have attained a strategic defeat of the CPP-NPA by 2010," Esperon said.

The Communist Party of the Philippines through its armed wing, the New People's Army, has been waging a guerrilla war in the countryside for nearly four decades.

President Macapagal-Arroyo approved on Friday the purchase of P10 billion worth of attack helicopters, shallow water boats, patrol vehicles and other equipment to bolster the military's fight against communist and Muslim rebels.

The President said that with the government's vastly improved fiscal position, it could now allocate an initial P10

AFP/ A8

After 400 years, Black Nazarene draws more devotees

By Christian V. Esguerra

THEY ASKED, AND IT WAS GIVEN.

A radio operator in his 60s was in great danger of a heart attack about four years ago. He was supposed to undergo bypass surgery, but could not afford the expensive procedure.

All but resigned to his fate, he went to the Quiapo Church and unburdened himself to the Black Nazarene.

He was never able to raise the needed money—but ultimately had no use for it, anyway. Inexplicably, the clog in his artery had disappeared.

The old man has since been a daily fixture at the Minor Basilica of the Black Nazarene, serving as a lay minister.

AFTER 400 YEARS/ A6

RUFINO PEPOYE CABATINGAN/CONTRIBUTOR

LITTLE TOWN WITH A BIG MESSAGE
Naawan is one of the smallest towns in Misamis Oriental (pop: 16,000) but town Mayor Dennis Roa is credited for its big, bright ideas like its holiday arch along the national highway made up of a mosque and a Christian church bridged by hands reaching out from each of the two structures jointly holding a globe. The message is clear, and urgent: Peace, love and unity.

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern Luzon will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. Visayas and Mindanao will be cloudy with scattered rainshowers over the eastern sections which may trigger flashfloods and landslides.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY LAW DE GUZMAN, PDI RESEARCH/01/06/07

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONTPAGE

Text us your feedback: inquirer news name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Probe loss of tainted meat from China, Gonzalez orders

By Armand N. Nocum

JUSTICE SECRETARY RAUL GONZALEZ HAS ordered the National Bureau of Investigation to investigate thoroughly reports that about half of a P40-million smuggled shipment of contaminated pork meat seized at the Manila South Harbor last October had been pilfered and sold in the public market.

Gonzalez said the NBI must look closely into the issue as it involved not just smuggling and pilfering but a threat to public health.

The meat, contained in four container vans, was feared have been infected with foot-and-mouth disease (FMD).

Whitewash

"We will not allow a whitewash here," Gonzalez said in a phone interview.

Gonzalez said justice department investigators would go after the Bureau of Customs personnel who allegedly connived with unscrupulous traders and brokers to spirit out about 40 percent of the condemned shipment which was seized last October and ordered destroyed "by burying" by Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales.

Frozen mackerel

The shipment of contaminated meat came from China, which has been hit by numerous cases of FMD. It was consigned to the Asia Golden Ark Marketing Center which allegedly declared it as "frozen mackerel" in a bid to escape the ban against the import of meat from China.

GONZALEZ

Morales had ordered the contaminated meat kept at the Sigma Storage and Warehouse at the Manila South Harbor and access to it was allowed only with written authorization from him.

But the day before the meat was to be destroyed, officials from the Veterinary Quarantine Office (VQO), the Bureau of Animal Industry and the BOC found the seals had been replaced.

Half were pilfered

"Approximately 40 to 50 percent of the shipment's contents were pilfered," said a report from the BOC Intelligence and Enforcement Group.

The disposal of the contaminated meat did not push through because Pampanga officials objected to having the meat buried in the province, fearing the possible spread of FMD.

Deputy Customs Commissioner Cesar Templo, who earlier asked the NBI to investigate, also recommended to Finance Secretary Margarito B. Teves that the contaminated meat shipment be returned to China.

GMA: Polls won't derail economic growth

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO yesterday allayed fears that the approaching elections would plunge the country into a new wave of political instability that would dampen the economic growth momentum.

The President assured Filipinos that the "political noise" would not derail the economy's climb to higher levels.

Welfare of people

"Our politics is the welfare of the people. We will not be distracted by the jabbing and shadow-boxing of the other side," she said in a speech during the inauguration of the Domalandan bridge connecting Dagupan City and Ligayen in Pangasinan province.

No threat at all

"Together more Filipinos are converging their talents and energy in moving the economy to greater heights even as we face the usual political noise attendant to mid-term elections. But they don't threaten at all the established growth curve of the economy that we did through the difficult reforms we made over the past six years," the President said.

Citing the generally positive economic indicators, the President said the country was "off to a good start, we are confident that 2007 will be the year it all comes together."

She noted the better-than-expected budget deficit figure in 2006 (P80 billion against the P120 billion target), the three-year low inflation, and foreign exchange reserves that stood at a historic high of $23 billion.

Spread to masses

The President said her team of "Congress, Cabinet and senior officials" was committed not only to posting rosy economic data but also to ensure that these gains are spread to the masses.

"Our plan to reduce the number of families living below the poverty line will not be hampered by the political season," she said.

She cited the administration's gains in the fight against poverty—self-rated poverty down from 63 percent to 51 percent and families living below the poverty line from 28 percent to 23 percent over the past six years.

In her New Year message, the President promised that 2007 would be the year when the poor would finally share in the economic wealth achieved through fiscal reforms.

Asean must change or become irrelevant, says Singapore exec

SINGAPORE—THE ASSOCIATION of Southeast Asian Nations must change or become irrelevant, Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister S. Jayakumar said yesterday.

Jayakumar represents the city-state on the Eminent Persons Group panel tasked with drawing up a proposed, legally binding charter for the 10-member bloc.

Critics accuse the disparate group—whose members range from wealthy Singapore to the impoverished communist nation of Laos—of being a "talking shop" that accomplishes little.

The 40-year-old association has also been strongly criticized for its failure to act against abuses, especially those involving military-ruled member Burma.

"If it just continues to do more of the same, I think over a period of time, Asean will just become one of those organizations which will slowly fade into the sunset," the "Straits Times" newspaper quoted Jayakumar as saying.

"Asean as an organization will atrophy and become marginalized" unless it reinvents itself, the "Today" daily quoted him as saying.

He was speaking ahead of the Asean's annual summit of leaders and meeting with its East Asian dialogue partners in Cebu province from Jan. 10 to 15.

The gathering was postponed from December after President Macapagal-Arroyo cited worries over an approaching typhoon.

However, Canada, Britain, Australia and the United States issued travel advisories last month warning of a possible terror attack in Cebu, and the warnings were seen by many as the reason for the cancellation.

Embassies for Canada, Britain and Australia in the Philippines were still warning of a possible terrorist threat on Friday, days before Asian leaders were due to arrive in Cebu.

In Kuala Lumpur, the Malaysian government said it was confident the summit would be free from terrorist attacks despite warnings from Australia, Britain, Canada and the United States.

Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar said Malaysia had assessed the security situation and was confident that the Philippines had taken steps to ensure safety at the summit.

After Malaysia "had done its evaluation, we believe the Philippine government has taken the appropriate measures to ensure the security of the leaders from Asean during the summit," he was quoted as saying by the Bernama news agency.

Syed Hamid said he was hopeful the summit would proceed smoothly despite the warnings, Bernama reported.

The Philippine government has confirmed attendance by all 16 heads of state of Asean member countries and their East Asian dialogue partners.

A draft of the charter prepared by the Eminent Persons Group is to be presented at the summit.

Former President Fidel Ramos, the Philippines' representative on the high-level panel, last month outlined details of the draft, which would be a radical departure from Asean members' traditional non-intervention in each other's affairs.

Ramos said decision-making by consultation and consensus should be retained for sensitive and important issues.

"But if consensus cannot be achieved, decisions may be taken through voting among members," he said.

"In exceptional circumstances the traditional policy of non-intervention may be adjusted and sanctions imposed for non-compliance.

"And yes, that may include suspension of a member state but not expulsion."

Jayakumar was quoted yesterday as saying Asean must push ahead with the "hard-nosed decisions" to make itself more effective. *AFP*

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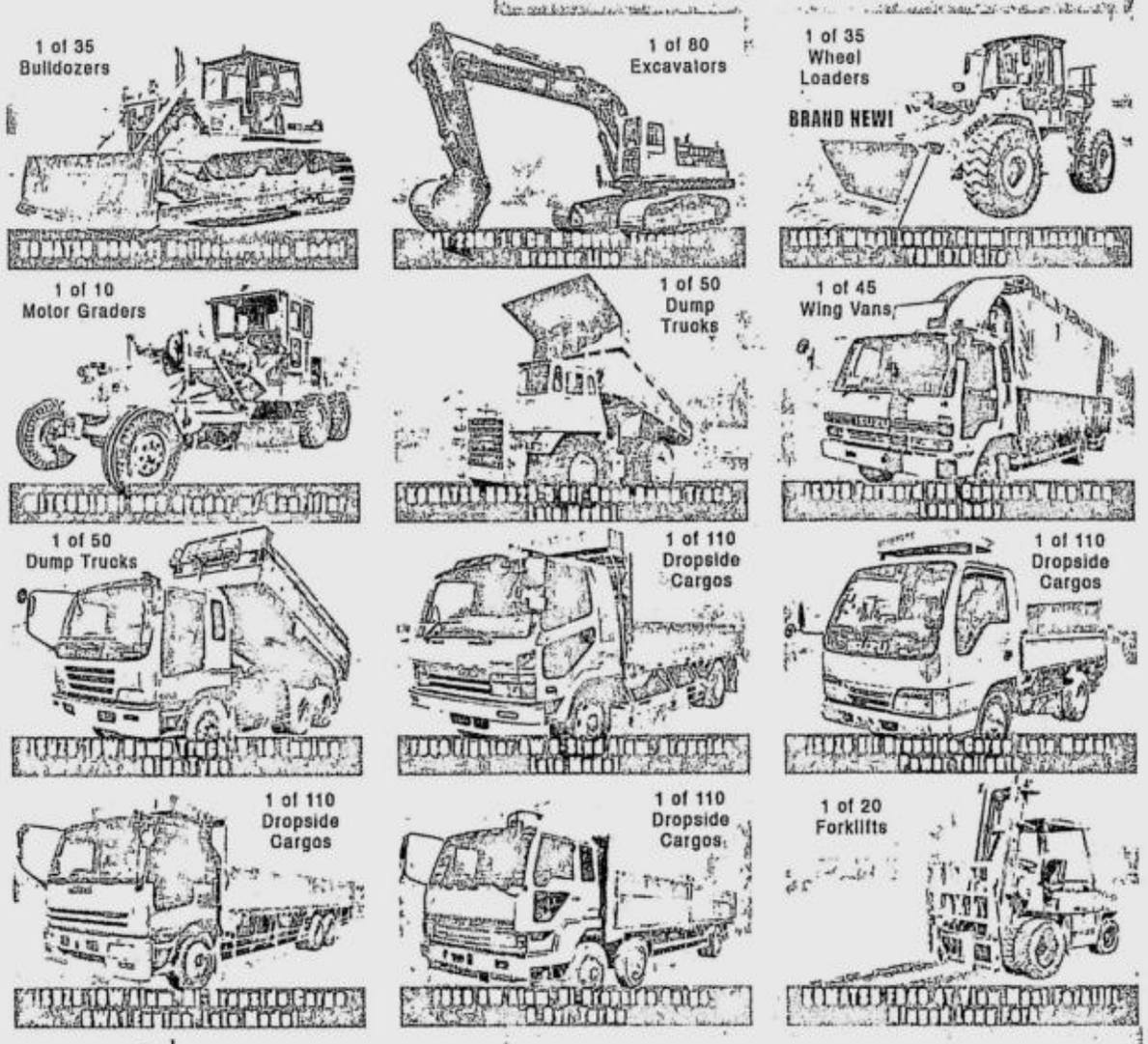

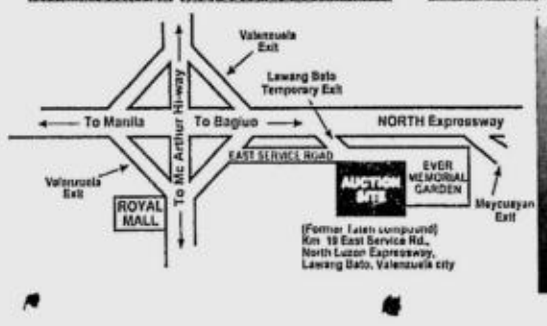

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Comelec denies backing new petition for people's initiative on Charter change

By Norman Bordadora

THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS HAS denied that the poll body was encouraging moves to file another petition for a people's initiative to amend the Constitution that some sectors fear could preempt the holding of the 2007 mid-term elections.

James Jimenez, the Comelec information director, explained that the poll body came up with rules and regulations covering the people's initiative process because it was the prudent thing to do after the Supreme Court supposedly lifted the injunction against initiative proceedings by the Comelec.

"It's a choice between doing something that can be accomplished within five hours of a working day and not having any regulation if and when somebody files a people's initiative petition. We'd rather have something to use if that happens," Jimenez told the weekly Kapihan sa Sulo forum yesterday.

New rules

The Comelec last Thursday released new rules and regulations on the conduct of a people's initiative to amend the Constitution and a subsequent plebiscite to ratify the amended Charter.

It explained that it was doing so to comply with the Supreme Court ruling last October which it said affirmed the sufficiency of RA 6735, or the Initiative and Referendum Law, for the initiative process. The Comelec interpreted the ruling as giving the poll agency the authority to issue the implementing rules and regulations needed to enforce the law.

Certain sectors have raised suspicions that the Comelec may have come up with the rules to help certain groups that want another go at the initiative process, including the gathering of the requisite millions of signatures and their verification by the poll agency.

"The people's initiative is a process. A part of this process is the gathering of signatures. This gathering of signatures has no political impact unless it results in a plebiscite," Jimenez said.

He said even if a successful initiative would result in a plebiscite, it would not preempt the 2007 elections as a plebiscite and election could be held at the same time.

"A plebiscite raises just one question answerable by yes or no. That can easily be included in the ballot," Jimenez said.

He, however, doubted that there would be enough time to pull off a quick people's initiative before the elections.

Tight schedule

"At this stage, it can still be done but the schedule will be tight.. If we talk about time, there is still time. But I have no great hope that it can be done soon enough," Jimenez said.

He said the Comelec's position is that the Supreme Court junked the Sigaw ng Bayan and the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines' initiative petition last October because of the way the signatures were gathered.

He said the Comelec also believes that the Supreme Court decision, in saying that RA 6735 was already sufficient for the process, also lifted the injunction barring the poll body from entertaining initiative petitions for lack of an enabling law.

But lawyer Christian Monsod, a former Comelec chair, said Jimenez may be mistaken in saying that the high court had lifted the injunction when it said RA 6735 was sufficient as an enabling law for the initiative process.

He said there was nothing in the Supreme Court decision that said the injunction had been lifted.

Monsod said what the justices had voted on was the junking of the people's initiative petition submitted by Sigaw and Ulap.

He said the SC did not tackle anymore the issue of sufficiency of the enabling law because of procedural lapses committed by Sigaw and Ulap during the gathering of signatures.

RP to shut 2 OFW offices

By Jerome Aning

THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR and Employment is set to shut down two of its Philippine Overseas Labor Offices (POLO) but will be opening another two in areas where the demand for overseas Filipino workers is projected to expand.

Labor Undersecretary for Employment Danilo Cruz told reporters the two POLOs to be closed were those found to be non-performing but he declined to say where they were located. He would only say that Labor Secretary Arturo Brion had ordered the "assessment and evaluation" of the nearly 30 POLOs around the world.

Countries with large number of OFWs, such as Saudi Arabia and Taiwan, have two or more POLOs. Some POLOs are manned by two or more labor attachés.

"We will first assess the operations and performance of the POLOs and then we'll decide," Cruz said.

Asked the basis for the closure of the POLOs, Cruz said: "It will include their per capita income, deployment rate, as well as their performance in terms of responding to distressed OFWs."

Even as two POLOs would be shut down, Brion said the DOLE would be opening two new ones in Australia and the Caribbean.

The one in Australia will be busy with the growing demand for Filipino nurses and caregivers there, as well as other skilled workers. It would also serve Filipino workers in New Zealand.

The other POLO would initially take care of promoting Philippine tourism and construction, maritime and health care workers in the 25 countries and territories in the Caribbean.

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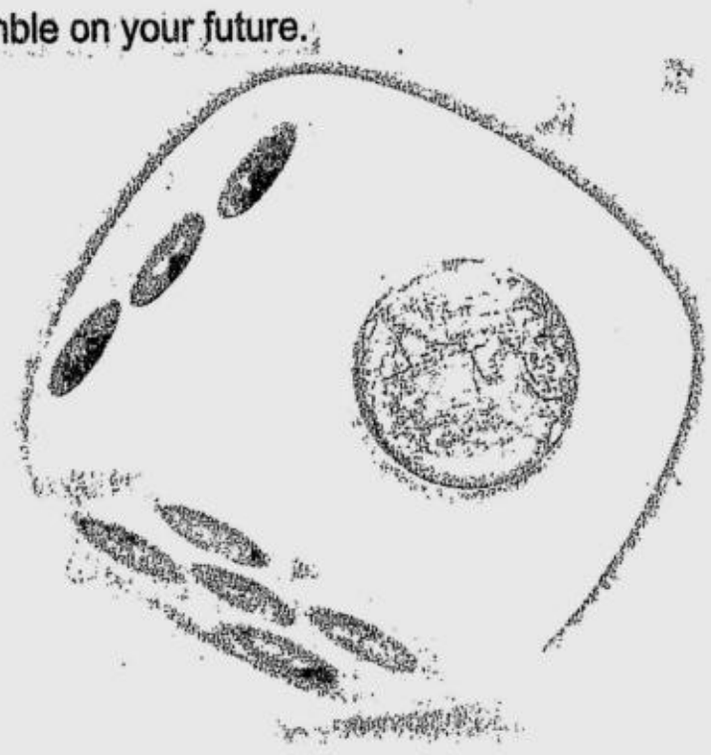

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Brion: 1-M 'high-end jobs' await Pinoys

By Jerome Aning

ALMOST A MILLION NEW "HIGH-END jobs" will be available overseas to Filipino workers in the next three months if they can maintain their edge against their competitors, according to Labor Secretary Arturo Brion.

"The 810,000 new jobs are on top of the one million annual deployment target that we have," Brion said on Friday at the conclusion of a five-day conference in Pasay City of labor attachés and welfare officers from 28 Philippine overseas labor offices around the world.

Brion's announcement heralded the new government policy focused on improving the deployment abroad of skilled workers who will draw higher pay and better working conditions.

Skilled workers would contribute more in terms of remittances and, when they eventually return to the Philippines, impart new knowledge and experience that could fuel local economic growth, he said.

Brion also announced that some 5,000 Filipino workers were expected to be deployed to Canada by 2008 with the country's booming petrochemical industry becoming an emerging alternative destination for highly skilled oil and gas workers.

The Philippines and the Canadian province of Saskatchewan recently forged an agreement boosting linkages and cooperation in labor, employment and human resource development.

Brion and Pat Atkinson, minister of advanced education and employment of Saskatchewan, signed the agreement during Brion's recent visit to Canada.

Brion said the accord affirmed the Canadian labor market's preference for Filipino workers. Philippine Ambassador to Canada Jose Brillantes, in a separate report, said that during the signing, Atkinson recognized the contributions made by Philippine immigrants to Saskatchewan society and its economy.

Brion disclosed that he would also be signing a similar agreement with officials from the Canadian province of Manitoba.

Brion noted that Canada, the world's second largest country in area, accounted for an increasing volume of remittances from major OFW host economies. He cited Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas figures indicating that total OFW remittances from Canada surpassed $117.061 million in 2005, representing a growth of 73.8 percent from the $67.338 million in 2004.

Brion stressed the importance of a continued supply of "quality OFWs," adding that the Department of Labor and Employment would be entering into deals with other countries with the view of involving foreign principals in training workers right here in the Philippines to develop the skills they need.

He said that a "labor market information system" would be set up "to provide timely signals on the market demand and supply of OFWs."

Most of the expected high-end jobs are in the telecommunications, medical and construction industries.

Rustico de la Fuente, labor attaché to Riyadh, said Saudi Arabia was planning to establish four "economic cities" in the next five years, which would include a seaport as big as the port of Rotterdam, the Netherlands, and that aside from construction workers, engineers and architects, the kingdom would need information technology workers, accountants, financial analysts and economists.

Corrections

IN THE JAN. 6 issue, a front page article—"Palace now dead set to kill VFA commission"—erroneously said that Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago "had sought the abolition of the VFACom as early as two years ago because of the executive director's (Undersecretary Zosimo Paredes)' personality disorder." The senator was misquoted. Santiago was not voicing her own opinion but was referring to President Macapagal-Arroyo's sentiments.

In the same issue, another front page article—"RP geologists rock, mines study shows"—misspelled the name of the organizer of a forum that presented a study titled "Impact of Filipino Geoscientists in the Minerals Industry." The organization is called Iuvenis Orbis, not Iuvenus Orbis, Inc.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Sunday, January 7, 2007
Epiphany of the Lord

1st Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6
Your light has come.

Arise, Jerusalem, shine, for your light has come.

The Glory of Yahweh rises upon you.

Night still covers the earth and gloomy clouds veil the peoples, but Yahweh now rises and over you his glory appears.

Nations will come to your light and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

Lift up your eyes round about and see: They are all gathered and come to you, your sons from afar, your daughters tenderly carried.

This sight will make your face radiant, your heart throbbing and full; the riches of the sea will be turned to you, the wealth of the nations will come to you.

A flood of camels will cover you, caravans from Midian and Ephah.

Those from Sheba will come, bringing with them gold and incense, all singing in praise of Yahweh.

2nd Reading: Ephesians 3:2-3, 5-6
The Gentiles are co-heirs of the promise.

Brothers and sisters, you may have heard of the graces God bestowed on me for your sake. By a revelation he gave me the knowledge of his mysterious design, as I have explained in a few words.

This mystery was not made known to past generations but only now, through revelations given to holy apostles and prophets. Now the non-Jewish people share the Inheritance; in Christ Jesus the non-Jews are incorporated and are to enjoy the Promise.

Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12
The magi

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, in Judea, during the days of King Herod, wise men from the east arrived in Jerusalem. They asked, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw the rising of his star in the east and have come to honor him."

When Herod heard this he was greatly disturbed and with him all Jerusalem. He immediately called a meeting of all high-ranking priests and the scribes, and asked them where the Messiah was to be born.

"In the town of Bethlehem in Judea," they told him, "for this is what the prophet wrote: And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, you are by no means the least among the clans of Judah, for from you will come a leader, the one who is to shepherd my people Israel."

Then Herod secretly called the wise men and asked them the precise time the star appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem with the instruction, "Go and get precise information about the child. As soon as you have found him, report to me, so that I too may go and honor him."

After the meeting with the king, they set out. The star that they had seen in the East went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was. The wise men were overjoyed on seeing the star again. They went into the house and when they saw the child with Mary his mother, they knelt and worshiped him. They opened their bags and offered him their gifts of gold, incense and myrrh.

In a dream they were warned not to go back to Herod, so they returned to their home country by another way.

Commentary

Light bursts forth upon us, and shatters the world's darkness. We live in radiance and our Lord shines over us. Now nations are to walk by his light—our light! Raise your eyes and look about and see all those who seek to gather and come. God desires to be known by everyone. All seek to praise God, to bring gifts to honor God's Holy One. We must live in this light, with all once called Gentiles but are now our brothers and sisters in God, members of the same body through the preaching of the Gospel. God is shown forth, made manifest in the light that radiates from our lives, our words and our welcome of others.

It is the ancient familiar story of three outsiders who saw in the sky the portent of God's entering humankind and dwelling upon the earth. They journey and meet Herod who seeks to harm the child they seek and they give him what he needs to kill the children in his search for Emmanuel, God-with-us. Only when they see the Child, do they know wisdom and return by another route. We too seek but have we found the wisdom of the Child who is profound peace, the savior of the poor?

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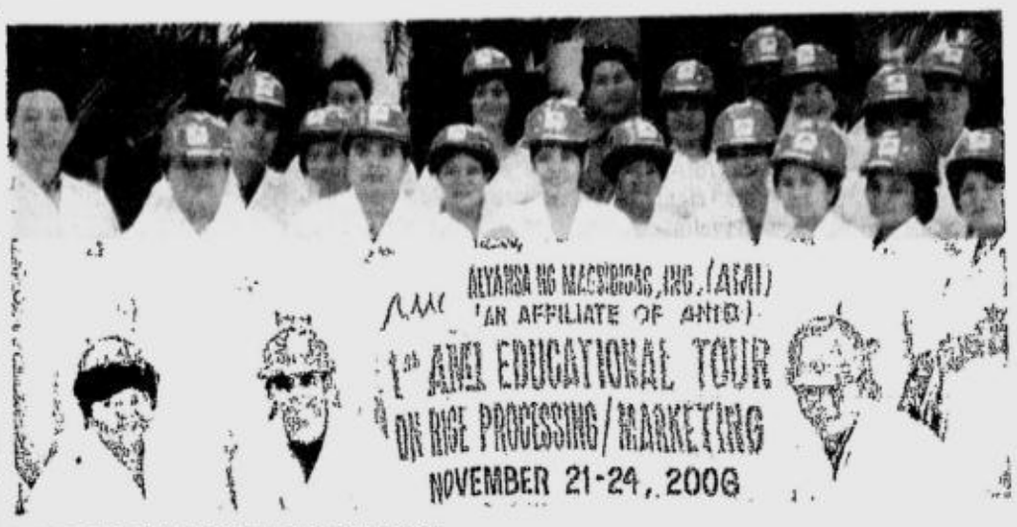

PINOYS GET RICE EDUCATION
Twenty-four members of Alyansa ng Industriyang Bigas Inc. (Anib) visited Bangkok recently to update themselves on the latest international trends in rice processing and marketing. Anib is a newly formed group composed of grains industry stakeholders aggressively promoting a more dynamic grains industry in the country. "We really have a lot to learn from our neighbors. Thailand and Vietnam, for example, print the harvest and packaging dates on their sacks, as well as the names of the retailers so they could be easily traced in case of complaints," said Robert Hernandez, ANIB president.

Gov't built more than 57,000 homes for poor in '06 –Noli

By Cynthia D. Balana

THE GOVERNMENT PROVIDED AFFORDable homes to 110,601 families and generated 434,082 jobs through the construction of 57,684 housing units last year, Vice President Noli de Castro has said.

In his report to the housing sector, De Castro, chair of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, said that from January to October 2006 the government released P36.516 billion to secure the housing tenure of squatter families and to assist families through shelter financing.

"We set our sights primarily on the housing needs of the poor Filipino families, and we were able to deliver housing services to benefit both the informal sector and the low income earners in the formal sector," he said.

The government's Asset Reform Program granted secure housing tenure to some 26,612 informal settler families through Presidential Proclamations declaring 423 hectares of idle state lands as socialized housing sites open for disposition to their occupants.

An additional 12,316 families were relocated from alongside railroad tracks and given permanent homes in resettlement sites in Bulacan.

This brought to 29,429 the total number of families relocated since 2004 from the NorthRail right-of-way from Metro Manila to Bulacan, while 7,500 more families from SouthRail were also relocated and given houses to pave the way for the rehabilitation and modernization of the railway system linking north and south Luzon.

De Castro said other housing programs, such as slum upgrading, site development and services, construction of core housing, medium-rise housing and the National Government Center housing project benefited a total of 22,939 households/families in 2006.

Under the Community Mortgage Program (CMP), 12,381 families gained shelter security from housing loans amounting to P667 million during the period.

The CMP enables informal settlers, slum dwellers or residents of blighted areas to purchase the privately owned lands they are occupying through affordable loans granted to their respective community associations.

The Pag-Ibig Fund, the top housing loan provider in the country, granted loans to a total of 35,603 eligible member-borrowers aggregating to P14.713 billion.

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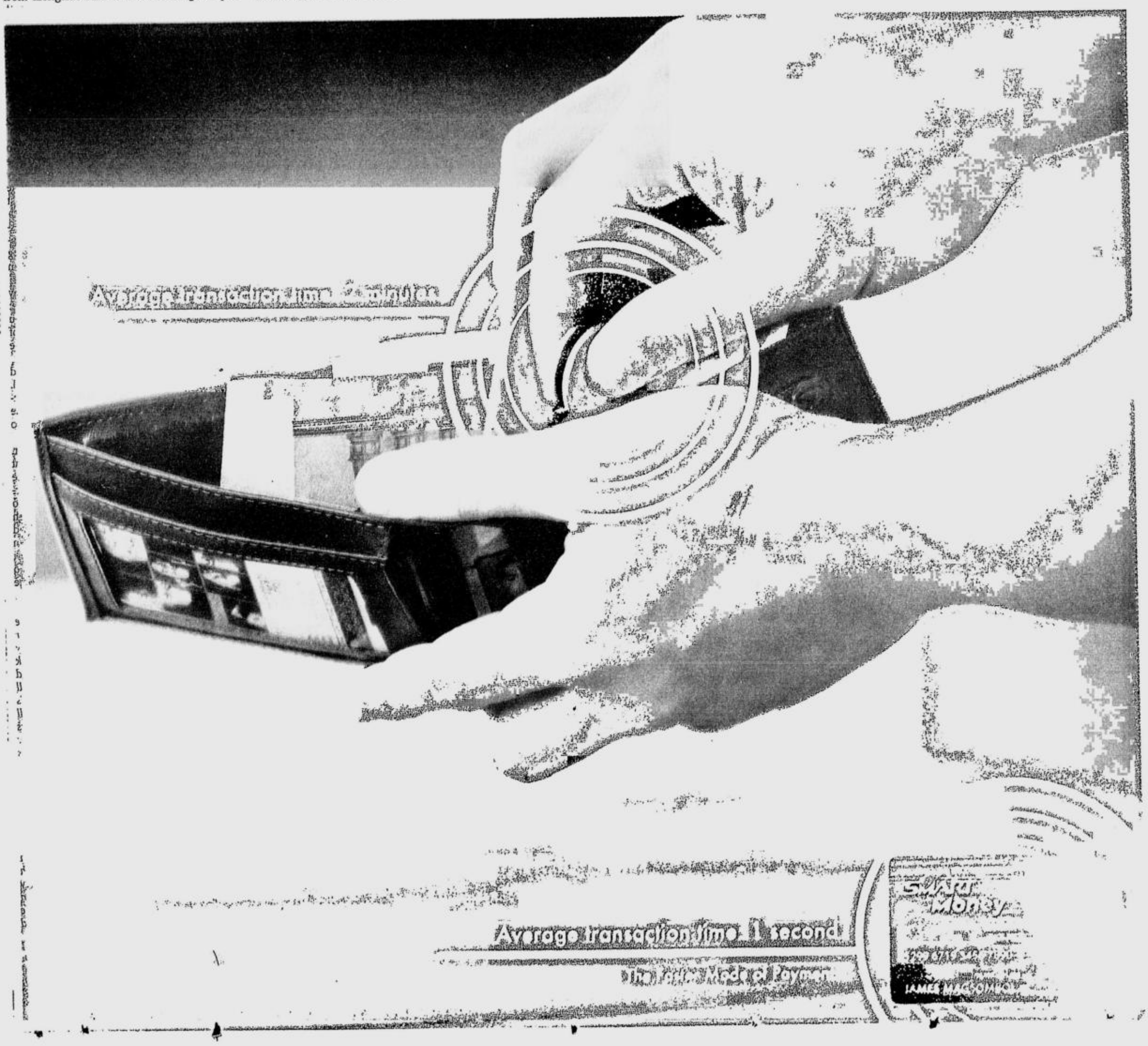


After 400 years, Black Nazarene draws more devotees

From page A1

Like him, a septuagenarian couple from Pampanga never fail to show up for 4 a.m. prayers at the church—their way of expressing gratitude for what they considered concrete blessings from the image of Christ.

They were a farming couple and it had seemed unimaginable for them to be able to put their nine children through school. But they managed somehow; each of the nine got a diploma and all are now professionals working abroad.

One dawn shortly before Christmas, the couple were again deep in prayer. But they were bidding the Black Nazarene a temporary goodbye. One of their children, now based in Hawaii in the United States, had invited them over for a long vacation.

"Their devotion was so important to them that they felt they needed to personally tell the Black Nazarene that they won't be able to see Him in the next two years," Msgr. Josefino Ramirez, rector of the basilica, told the INQUIRER.

Nazarene at Quirino Grandstand

Fidelity to their faith is no small matter to these devotees and many others who troop to the Quiapo district in Manila each year on Jan. 9, the feast day of the Black Nazarene.

They seek certain blessings and favors or simply give thanks for answered prayers, and the grim prospect of injury in the heaving sea of devotees is not enough to keep them away.

Organizers are understandably abuzz in preparing for the Black Nazarene's 400th anniversary on Tuesday.

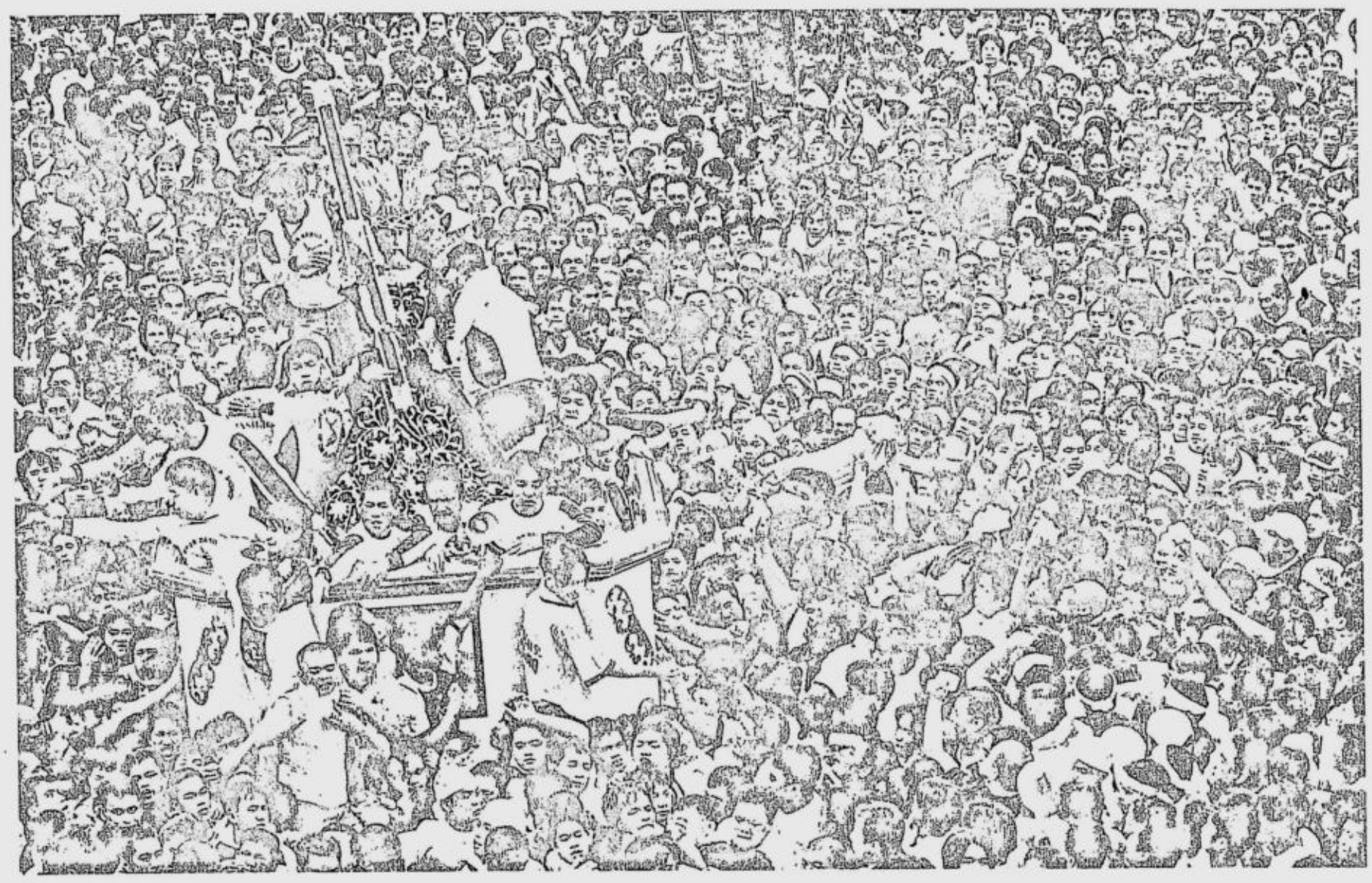
Expecting even more devotees, the Archdiocese of Manila has decided to hold a related religious service at Quirino Grandstand in Rizal Park on the eve of the feast day.

The activity is partly intended to "diffuse" the huge number of devotees expected to turn up, but mainly to provide them an opportunity to experience an important aspect of their religious commitment, Ramirez said.

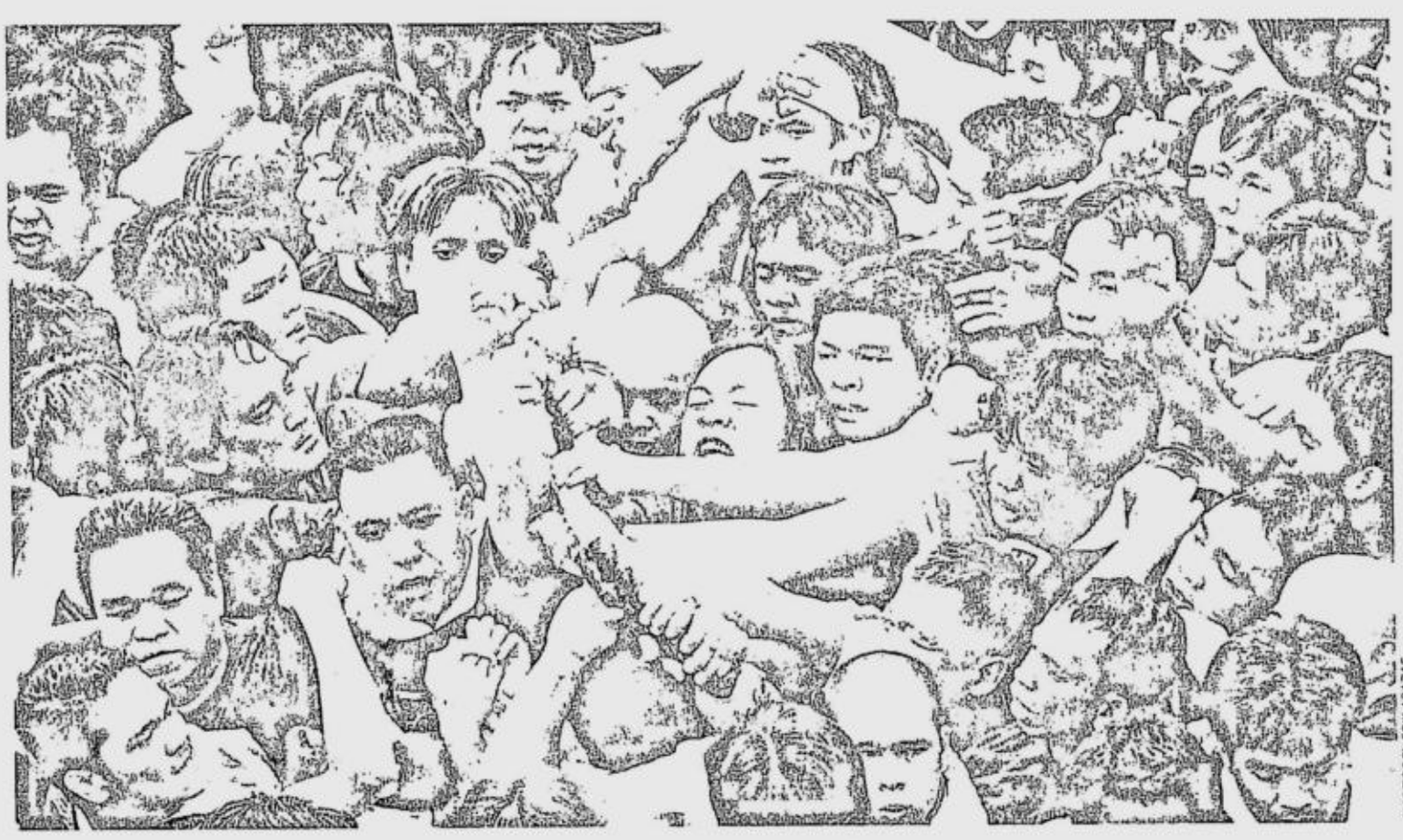
"What we really need is conversion," he said.

Devotees may view the venerated image at the grandstand beginning Monday night, when a vigil will be held.

Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales will celebrate Mass the following morning, after which the image will be taken to Quiapo at noon.



'To many of the devotees, He is the Filipino version of Jesus Christ.'



PHOTOS BY ERIK ARAZAS

YEAR AFTER YEAR, a sea of devotees, prospects of injury, frenzied followers reaching out to touch the venerated image or even just hold the rope that keeps it in place, and always faith beyond all telling, mark the procession of the Black Nazarene image on its feast day on Jan. 9.

The procession ordinarily covered only the vicinity of the minor basilica, where devotees, most of them male, take turns in touching the Black Nazarene or pulling the ropes attached to the carriage bearing the image.

But this year, Ramirez said, organizers had decided to bring the image also to the grandstand to accommodate more devotees.

Ship on fire

The annual procession commemorates the first procession to transfer the image from a church in Intramuros to the present St. John de Baptist Church (the other name of the basilica) in Quiapo on Jan. 9, 1767, according to Ramirez.

The image arrived from Mexico much earlier in Manila, in 1607, on board a ship that had caught fire. The image did not entirely escape the blaze, resulting in its charcoal color.

But its new color somehow helped put in context its meaning to Filipinos, then the prime object of Catholic evangelization by Spanish missionaries in this part of the world.

"Somehow, Filipinos, because of our brown skin, get to identify with the color of the Black Nazarene," Ramirez said. "To many of the devotees, He is the Filipino version of Jesus Christ."

The image showing Christ bent under the weight of an enormous cross also bears much significance to hard-up Filipinos, Ramirez said.

3 brothers

In it, they see not only a compassionate savior, but also one who walks and suffers with them—a pilgrim church, he said.

As the story goes, three teenage brothers from Butuan, Agusan del Norte, realized how it was to walk with Christ.

Lured to Manila by the promise of better jobs, the brothers found themselves working under miserable conditions. And they were torn apart—one was sent to Cavite, and the two others worked separately in Manila.

They eventually lost touch, each hearing no word about the other.

One Holy Week, the youngest brother chanced upon a feeding program at the Quiapo Church. He found himself kneeling before the Black Nazarene, praying that he would be reunited with his missing brothers before Christmas.

A series of fortunate events, aided by emotional appeals on television, brought all of them together at the basilica, just as the youngest brother had wished for.

Thus did the Black Nazarene draw three more devotees.

Value in volume

The Nazarene miracle also rubbed off on many other faceless devotees one Sunday Mass last year.

Donation boxes stationed around the church yielded P300,000 for the victims of Superty-phoon "Reming." It was no small sum for parishioners, many of them street vendors, for whom crisp bills are alien.

"The value was in the volume, not the individual worth of the donations," Ramirez said.

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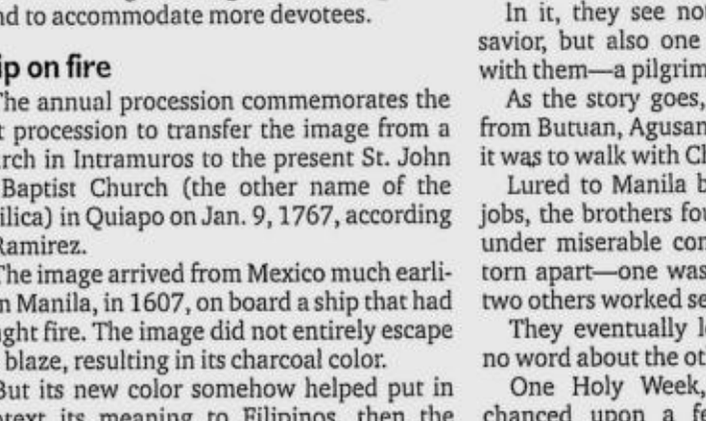

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Trading firm that hired Sino fishers unlicensed, says WWF

By Norman Bordadora
and Volt Contreras

THE MANILA-BASED TRADING firm which chartered the Chinese fishing vessel Hoi Wan and its 30-man crew who were caught with endangered fish species, including 300 Napoleon wrasses or "mameng," within the Tubbataha Marine Park was not licensed to do business in the Philippines.

The World Wide Fund for Nature in the Philippines yesterday said South Pacific Inter-Marketing Corp. (SPIM) was neither registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission nor with the Department of Trade and Industry.

"(SPIM) chartered the Hoi Wan. Therefore, SPIM bought and owned the fish. We have discovered that SPIM is not registered with the SEC, nor with the Department of Trade and Industry in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). Does it pay taxes at all? Is it doing business legally?" Lorenzo Tan, WWF-Philippines president, told the INQUIRER.

But Nixon Edora, SPIM's operations manager, said that its fish cargo, including the protected species mameng, was entirely bought from licensed fish farms in Tawi-Tawi, particularly in Barangay Sheik Makdung in Sibuto town.

'Mameng' is sold for over US$100 per kilo in Hong Kong and other Asian markets.

Edora also insisted the firm did not violate the Fisheries Code which allows the exportation of live fish propagated in government-accredited hatcheries or ponds.

He showed a certification bearing the signature of Tawi-Tawi Gov. Sadikul Sahali, issued on Nov. 23, 2006, stating that Edora and the firm's president, Fong Kwan Kong, were legitimate businessmen engaged in the buying and selling of fisheries products in the province.

According to Edora, the vessel was heading for Manila to secure export permits from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources' main office, since the BFAR office in Tawi-Tawi had no authority to issue these.

"However, in the event that the application for permits and clearances be denied, the cargo consisting of fishery products shall be sold in the domestic market," SPIM said in a statement.

Tan said this was a clear admission that SPIM had bought and transported the fish without the necessary permits.

Edora also claimed that GPS (global positioning system) recordings of the route taken by the Hoi Wan would disprove charges that its crew engaged in poaching within the marine park.

He said that GPS data stored in the boat's navigation system will show that the Hoi Wan was cruising toward Manila about "11 miles" from the sanctuary at the time the vessel was apprehended.

NIXON EDORA, manager of South Pacific Inter-Marketing Corp., points to the spot where the Chinese ship it hired, and which was carrying endangered fish species, was apprehended by Philippine authorities, to prove the boat was outside the protected Tubbataha Reef. RAFFY LERMA

"The manner of apprehension was illegal considering that we were outside. The GPS will not lie and we are willing to have (its memory) opened," said Edora, whose Binondo-based firm was set up only last year.

But Tan said there was no truth to SPIM's claim that the Hoi Wan was 11 nautical miles from Tubbataha when it was apprehended.

"If the Hoi Wan were 11 nautical miles away from the Tubbataha ranger station, it could not have been physically spotted. Eleven nautical miles is beyond normal visual range, even with binoculars," Tan said.

"In truth, the statement from the rangers, validated by GPS readings, showed they were only 1.5 nautical miles from the station, and well within the boundaries of Palawan, and the national park," he said.

The 30-man crew of the Hoi Wan were nabbed on Dec. 21 by Tubbataha reef rangers after the endangered fish species were found on the vessel. The crew was detained at the Palawan provincial jail. Six of them had posted bail as of Friday.

As this developed, the militant fisherfolk Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) urged the issuance of a hold-departure order against the 30 Chinese fishermen.

Pamalakaya national chair Fernando Hicap said the 23 other poachers were set to be freed at anytime. *With a report from Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

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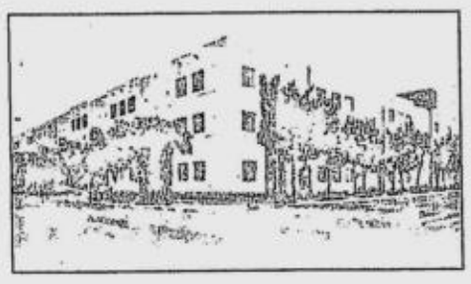

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Troops kill 7 Abu leaders in gun battle

By Julie Alipala
Inquirer Mindanao
and Dona Pazzibugan

SEVEN ABU SAYYAF BANDITS—including a commander with a $40,000 price on his head—were killed yesterday in a gun battle at sea while fleeing from government forces off Tawi-Tawi, military officials said.

The slain Abu Sayyaf leaders were identified as Jundam Jumalul, known as the Black Killer, who was wanted by the United States which put up a P40,000 reward for his capture or death and Abu Hubaida .

Troops from the Marines, Army and Navy clashed with the group in the waters off Panglima Sugala, southern Tawi-Tawi at about 5 p.m. yesterday, killing all seven Abu Sayyaf on a pump boat, said military spokesperson Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro, quoting from reports.

One other body, that of a certain Gadar, was also identified, said Commodore Geronimo Defensor, commander of Naval Forces Western Mindanao.

"Four others remain unidentified but all seven bodies were recovered along with firearms," he said.

There were no casualties in the government side, he said.

Brig. Gen. Juancho Sabban, commander of the 3rd Marine Brigade, said the Marines spotted the seven-man group in Patikul, Sulu, on Friday and tracked them to Capual island.

He said the bandits fled to Tawi-Tawi after a brief clash.

Government troops caught up with the group in Barangay Balimbing in Panglima Sugala.

Defensor said the Navy put up a blockade to prevent the group from slipping away.

Jamalul's group was involved in the 2000 Sipadan hostage-taking incident where more than a dozen people, including Western tourists, were taken by the bandit group at gunpoint.

He was also allegedly involved in other Abu Sayyaf attacks.

Also yesterday, the military said it arrested two suspected Abu Sayyaf members who were allegedly involved in the Dos Palmas kidnapping in 2001 that led to the infamous Lamitan siege on June 2, 2001.

The two, identified as Wakil Sampang and Abug Sampang, were caught by a military and police team in a restaurant in Zamboanga City at about 2.30 p.m. yesterday.

The two were allegedly among the Abu Sayyaf members who were cornered at the Dr. Jose Torres Foundation Hospital in Lamitan, Basilan, on June 2, 2001, after they had kidnapped tourists from the Dos Palmas Resort in Palawan.

The bandits released some of their hostages but kept the American couple Martin and Gracia Burnham and took a new hostage from the hospital, nurse Ediborah Yap.

Despite the military cordon, the bandits got away and a number of soldiers died in the fighting during the hospital siege.

A congressional investigation cleared military generals of collusion with the Abu Sayyaf.

Martin Burnham and Yap were later killed in a botched rescue operation.

The military has embarked on an ambitious campaign to neutralize the Abu Sayyaf, which recently allied itself with the Indonesian-based Jemaah Islamiyah, which has been linked to the al-Qaida international terror group.

JI operatives have been training Abu Sayyaf bandits in bomb-making techniques perfected by al-Qaida.

Recently, the military launched Oplan Ultimatum, aimed at capturing the group's ranking leaders and several Indonesian terrorists hiding in Sulu.

But so far, only a few bandit leaders have been arrested or killed.

Recently, the military said it found a grave containing the remains of Abu Sayyaf chieftain Khadaffy Janjalani, who it believes may have been killed in a battle with government troops last September.

Tissue samples from the remains have been brought to the US for DNA testing, using samples taken from Janjalani's brother, Hector, who is in prison in Manila.

The Abu Sayyaf, founded by Abdurajak Abubakar Janjalani, Khadaffy's older brother, gained notoriety in the late 1980s after it staged a series of kidnappings and bomb attacks.

The group, which styles itself as an Islamist group, is included in Washington's list of terror organizations because of its activities targeting Americans and other foreigners.

AFP '07 target: Crush 24 of 52 Red guerrilla fronts

From page A1

billion, with the promise of more funds, for the modernization of the Armed Forces, one of the most ill-equipped in Asia.

According to a defense official, the government planned to spend P30 billion in the six years from 2006 to upgrade the military's internal security operations capabilities.

We're winning

Esperon said the military would pour in more forces in its counter-insurgency campaign, deploying one Army brigade composed of around 1,200 troops for every known rebel guerrilla front.

"I'm announcing we are winning, we are on track and we will continue to win," he said.

The military has come up with a new three-year internal security strategy called Oplan Bantay Laya II, a continuation of the five-year Oplan Bantay Laya that ended in 2006.

ESPERON: We're winning

The strategy is aimed not only at communist insurgents but other threat groups like the Abu Sayyaf kidnap gang and the secessionist Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

According to the military, 850 NPA rebels were either killed or captured last year, including 13 guerrilla front secretaries. About 500 of them were reportedly killed in encounters.

The military said it recovered 556 firearms from the NPA during encounters last year.

Dismantle fronts

Esperon said 11 guerrilla fronts were "dismantled" last year through military pursuit operations, with 12 guerrilla fronts merged into six, three other fronts downgraded and two others dissolved.

He said the AFP was introducing another innovation this year. Soldiers will undertake "modest civic projects" such as farm-to-market roads and water systems in the barangays that had been cleared of communist rebels.

Of the country's 42,000 barangays, the military estimates that 2,121 are "affected" by the NPA, meaning that rebels operate in these areas.

The military also reported that 81 members of the Abu Sayyaf were killed in encounters while eight firearms were recovered last year.

Esperon said the Abu Sayyaf group's strength "has been further reduced to 452."

"The AFP has continued to keep them on the run and prevent them from escalating their terror attacks," he said.

Since August, about 8,000 troops have been pursuing remnants of the Abu Sayyaf that has perpetrated the worst terror attacks in the country.

'Holistic approach'

Esperon said the military will continue to support peace negotiations with the MILF while the ceasefire agreed on in 2003 remains in place.

He said the military was going for a "holistic approach" in its counterinsurgency campaign this year.

He said they would "harness the involvement of NGOs and other people's organizations" in the campaign.

He said they would continue to coordinate with local officials and with the Philippine National Police. Coordinating centers with the PNP will be set up in the regions and provinces.

And now, first diet drug for fat dogs

From page A1

for obese dogs on Friday. Called Slentrol, the Pfizer Inc. drug is aimed at helping fat Fidos shed extra pounds.

The drug, however, is not recommended for humans or felines.

"This is a welcome addition to animal therapies, because dog obesity appears to be increasing," said Stephen Sundlof, director of the Center for Veterinary Medicine at the Food and Drug Administration.

A dog that weighs 20 percent more than its ideal weight is considered obese. That takes in about 5 percent of the nearly 62 million dogs in the United States. An additional 20 percent to 30 percent are considered overweight.

The liquid drug appears to reduce the amount of fat a dog can absorb. It also seems to trigger a feeling of satiety or fullness, according to the FDA.

Side effects

The prescription drug can also produce some unfortunate side effects, including loose stools, diarrhea, vomiting, lethargy and loss of appetite.

And it is not for dog owners. The FDA discourages the drug's use in humans and lists a litany of side effects should anyone ignore the advice. Nor is Slentrol, also called dirlotapide, for use in cats.

In general, dogs need a far fattier diet than humans do to thrive. Fat is an essential source of calories for dogs and is necessary for growth, development, reproduction and healthy skin, according to the American Veterinary Medical Association.

Like all diet drugs, Slentrol is meant to be part of an overall weight management program that includes a complete and balanced diet and exercise, according to its label. The drug, however, is not a cure for obesity; its effects cease within a day or two of stopping treatment.

Dogs, like people, grow fatter as they eat more and exercise less, said Bonnie Beaver, a professor at Texas A&M University's College of Veterinary Medicine. Beaver said the drug would appeal to dog owners who want a fast and simple way to slim down their paunchy pooches.

"It's easy to say we will feed them less and exercise them more. Well, we know how well that works for us," said Beaver, a past president of the American Veterinary Medical Association.

Slentrol should be available from veterinarians in the spring, according to Pfizer Animal Health. The once-daily drug should cost between $1 (P48.85) and $2 (P97.70) a dose, company spokesperson Diane Iselin said. *AP*

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VALDES CLAN REUNION
Saturday, January 27, 2007

The Annual Valdes Clan Reunion will be held on January 27, 2007 (Saturday) at the North Forbes Pavilion, Cambridge corner Kawayan Streets, North Forbes Park, Makati City. This year's reunion will be hosted by the RED Group (descendants of Leodegaria Valdes-Lilles).

The fun-filled affair will commence at 10:00 A.M. and will be capped by an anticipated Mass at 4:00 P.M. Dress comfortably and bring your families– there will be lots of games and prizes!

For more information please contact Gina at 725-4509 during office hours. Other contact persons are: Bert Panlilio (729-2096) for the BLUE Group; Linda B. Guanzon (888-5675) and Lulu A. Guanzon (365-1227) for the RED Group; Aye Yap-Azurin (821-5092) and Sally Henson-Naguiat (373-8466) for the YELLOW Group; and Rose Lopez (810-7533) for the GREEN Group.

Spread the word!

HOUSE AWAY FROM HOUSE: Congressmen enjoy hanging out at Rep. Mikey Arroyo's restaurant along Macapagal Avenue, Pasay City, which serves authentic Kapampangan and Spanish dishes. Also on the menu are the daily results of horse racing for aficionados. RUDY ESPERAS

No pork in a barrel . . .

From page A1

race track. Race results are conveniently beamed from four wall-mounted television sets in the resto.

It's easy to find this place owned by President Macapagal-Arroyo's first-born. Not only does it have a flashing neon sign that says: "Mikey's Bar and Grill," it is located at Hobbies of Asia, a mid-size mall on the boulevard that bears his grandfather's name, the late President Diosdado Macapagal.

The resto's official receipt, however, carries its business name: "Mikey's Horseman Bar and Grill Inc."

On some nights, you can catch the namesake of First Gentleman Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo getting a neck and shoulder massage while holding court with friends from the horse racing industry, of which the young Arroyo is a known patron.

And if you're lucky, Representative Arroyo himself might even see you to the door, sending you off with a warm "Thank you for coming... "

Off-track betting

The resto has simple, almost austere interiors which can be seen from the outside through its all-glass walls.

A huge tarp highlights the resto's specialty: authentic Spanish and Kapampangan cuisine.

Posted on the door is a bond paper-size sign with the letters "OTB" and an arrow pointing to the left. This means there's an off-track betting station next door.

Workers of other outlets at the Hobbies of Asia mall said they always knew when the young Arroyo was around by the presence of Presidential Security Group (PSG) men and the line of luxury vehicles with No. 8 plates.

"The President's son stays [in his restaurant] usually until 10 p.m., except when there is a function or when he has special visitors," a waiter in another restaurant told the INQUIRER.

Mikey's Bar and Grill was inaugurated in October, with no less than Ms Arroyo herself gracing the affair, according to an employee from a neighboring outlet. "They even closed the area when she came," the employee added, referring to the parking lot and driveway.

On Dec. 12, Representative Arroyo and several congressmen stayed at Mikey's until midnight, hanging out in the cabana in front of the restaurant.

On Dec. 22, guests at a private party held at Mikey's had hoped to get a glimpse of the owner. They must have been disappointed when the young Arroyo did not show up.

Palace sees no urgent need yet to review VFA

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Armand N. Nocum

NOW MALACAÑANG SEES NO URGENT need to review the 1999 RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement.

The turnabout, indicated yesterday by Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, came only two days after Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye announced the Palace's "resolve" to revisit the agreement governing the conduct of visiting US troops, and a day after the US Embassy said a review at this point would be "premature."

In an interview with reporters after attending Mass at a church in Pasay City, Ermita said: "We said earlier that it's a matter for them to take a second look [at]. Let's give the DFA (Department of Foreign Affairs) a chance to do back-channeling to find out if there is really a need. But we should not say definitely that it (the VFA) should be reviewed.

"[The document] signed by [Foreign] Secretary [Alberto] Romulo and US Ambassador [Kristie] Kenney on this issue should be just a reaffirmation of what is in the agreement. Whatever the extraordinary circumstances are, let's just look at them, but it doesn't mean we have to review the entire agreement."

Ermita said there was no need for the DFA to file a formal request to review the agreement because the case involving convicted rapist Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith was merely an "eye opener" on specific phrases in the agreement.

"Such phrases on extraordinary circumstances are the only ones that are needed to be fixed. The DFA knows them already, and they could be making their own back-channeling," he said.

'We never said ...'

Ermita insisted that Malacañang was not flip-flopping on the issue.

"We never said there was a need to revise the VFA. It was a wake-up call—that's what happened," he said.

On Thursday, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye issued an official statement saying: "The government is resolved to review the VFA and, if warranted, to work with Congress to amend certain provisions thereof in order to prevent future controversies."

On Friday, US Embassy spokesperson Matthew Lussenhop said such a review would be "premature" considering that Smith's rape conviction was still under appeal.

Ermita claimed he was "not conversant with what Secretary Bunye might have said."

Also, Ermita said, there was "definitely no pressure" from US authorities to backpedal on the VFA review call.

He said there had been positive developments, as well as an understanding between the two countries: *"Maganda nga yung nangyari* in the recent developments. *Maganda naman ang pagkakaunawaan ngayon ng* US government through the US Embassy and the Philippine government."

Good faith

Filipinos should be more trustful of people they are entering into treaties with, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said.

He stressed this point as he called on Filipinos to trust that the Americans would keep their end of the agreement by keeping Smith detained at the US Embassy and not spirit him out of the country.

"The important thing, really, is that we presume good faith on both sides. That is the presumption under the rules of evidence," he said in a phone interview.

According to Gonzalez, those people critical of Smith's transfer back to US custody are "creating monsters" over which they are losing sleep.

"If we are working all the time against good faith, then we will never be happy. Please remind them that under the law, good faith is always presumed," he said.

He also said that some Filipinos would never be satisfied about how the VFA was being implemented because they did not trust the Americans to hew to the agreement.

'Visitorial' rights

Gonzalez dismissed the opinion of law dean Amado Valdez that following the Court of Appeals ruling upholding the country's "exclusive rights" over Smith, the latter should be returned to Philippine custody and local authorities should take control and supervision of his detention quarters.

He said there was no longer need to do this because the US government had granted Philippine authorities "visitorial" rights over Smith.

"When the Americans agreed to the visitorial powers, they waived their supposed sovereignty within the premises of the US Embassy," he said.

Valdez is the dean of the University of the East College of Law and a former commissioner of the Presidential Commission on the VFA.

Gonzalez also said that while he agreed that there should be a review of the VFA, the outcome would no longer apply to Smith.

"Any renegotiation that would result in something unfavorable to Smith would be unconstitutional. That would become an ex post facto law,'" he said of the legal principle that Merriam Webster's Dictionary of Law describes as "a law that retroactively alters a defendant's rights ... by criminalizing and imposing punishment for an act that was not criminal or punishable at the time it was committed ..."

Thus, Gonzalez said, any revision would only affect future cases similar to Smith's.

Terminate VFA

In a statement, Jose Manuel I. Diokno and Zeneida Quezon Avanceña, chairs of the Free Legal Assistance Group and the Jose W. Diokno Foundation Inc., respectively, called for the VFA's immediate termination, saying that there would be "more Daniel Smiths" for as long as the agreement remained in force.

The VFA is "not a treaty," is "unconstitutional," and is "one-sided," according to Diokno and Avanceña.

"To us, the real issue here is not the proper interpretation of the VFA but the validity and wisdom of the VFA itself. The case of Daniel Smith shows us exactly why the VFA should be terminated immediately," they said, adding:

"Daniel Smith was found guilty by a Philippine court of raping a Filipina on Philippine soil. He was duly charged, arraigned, tried and convicted, and has now appealed his conviction.

"Like anyone else convicted of raping a Filipina in Philippine territory, Daniel Smith should have been transferred to a Philippine prison. Instead, he is in the custody of the United States, in the US Embassy, on US territory.

"Would a Filipino soldier convicted of the same offense in the United States be given the same treatment?"

EPIPHANY MASS: President Arroyo attends Mass at the San Roque Parish Church, Pasay City, with Vice President Noli de Castro who flashes the peace sign at someone in the crowd. The Epiphany or the Feast of the Three Kings officially ends the Christmas season in the country but Filipinos hang on to their trimmings and revelries for as long as possible. LYN RILLON

Vocal VFA exec resigns

From page A1

be announced soon.

Parting as friends

Asked if he was actually pressed into quitting in that meeting with Ermita, Paredes would only say that "I insinuated, and he agreed."

"We parted ways as friends," he said, disclosing that he had earlier served as Ermita's legal counsel and special assistant for four-and-a-half years, when the latter was still serving as the President's adviser on the peace process.

"I was made to explain and I'm happy that [Ermita] cordially gave me my day in court," he said.

Paredes said that after leaving the VFA-Com, he might practice or teach law in colleges in Baguio, which he, being a graduate of the Philippine Military Academy, considers his adopted city.

In the early stages of the Subic rape case, Paredes was among the most sought-after media sources for updates and legal opinions on the investigation.

He also led a government team that verified the presence and detention conditions at the US Embassy of Smith and the three other coaccused US Marines (since acquitted) during their marathon trial.

"Every man is entitled to his belief and conviction. I should not be faulted. It's been a very interesting stint at the VFA-Com, a learning process," said Paredes, a lawyer, retired colonel and former assemblyman.

He said relatives and friends, including "a justice and my brothers in the UP Vanguard," a civic military fraternity at the University of the Philippines, had "congratulated" him for his stand.

RAM pioneer

A member of PMA Class of 1971, Paredes was a pioneering member of the Reform the Armed Forces Movement, the military rebel group that launched a series of coup attempts against the administration of President Corazon Aquino.

He rose to the rank of colonel in the now defunct Philippine Constabulary before leaving the military service and winning a seat in the Marcos-era Batasang Pambansa in 1984.

But he was unable to finish his term as assemblyman representing Ifugao because of the People Power uprising that toppled the Marcos dictatorship two years later.

In an interview with the INQUIRER on Thursday, Paredes said officials of the executive branch "took the law into their own hands" when they arranged a convoy to whisk Smith out of the Makati City Jail, where the Marine had been held since he was convicted on Dec. 4 of raping "Nicole."

He said that while he fully agreed with Smith's transfer to US custody because it ostensibly fulfilled Philippine obligations under the VFA, "it should have been done properly—no coercion, no bullying."

The transfer was made when the Court of Appeals had yet to rule on Smith's petition for his return to US custody, for which the convicted Marine invoked the provisions of the 1999 agreement.

Paredes wondered why Malacañang, through the Department of Foreign Affairs, had earlier bothered to file pleadings in support of Smith in the appellate court, only to carry out the transfer ahead of a court "authorization."

He made the remarks a day after the court ruled that Smith's petition had been rendered "moot" by a Dec. 22 agreement between Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo and US Ambassador Kristie Kenney to return Smith to the US Embassy for the duration of the appeals process.

Out of sync

Paredes described the appellate court's ruling as "neither here nor there" when it affirmed the legality of Makati Judge Benjamin Pozon's order committing Smith to the city jail, yet found nothing irregular in the Dec. 29 transfer.

That view again put the VFACom official—whose agency falls under the Office of the President—out of sync with the rest of the Palace officials who had hailed the court ruling as a validation of Smith's midnight transfer.

With a report from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

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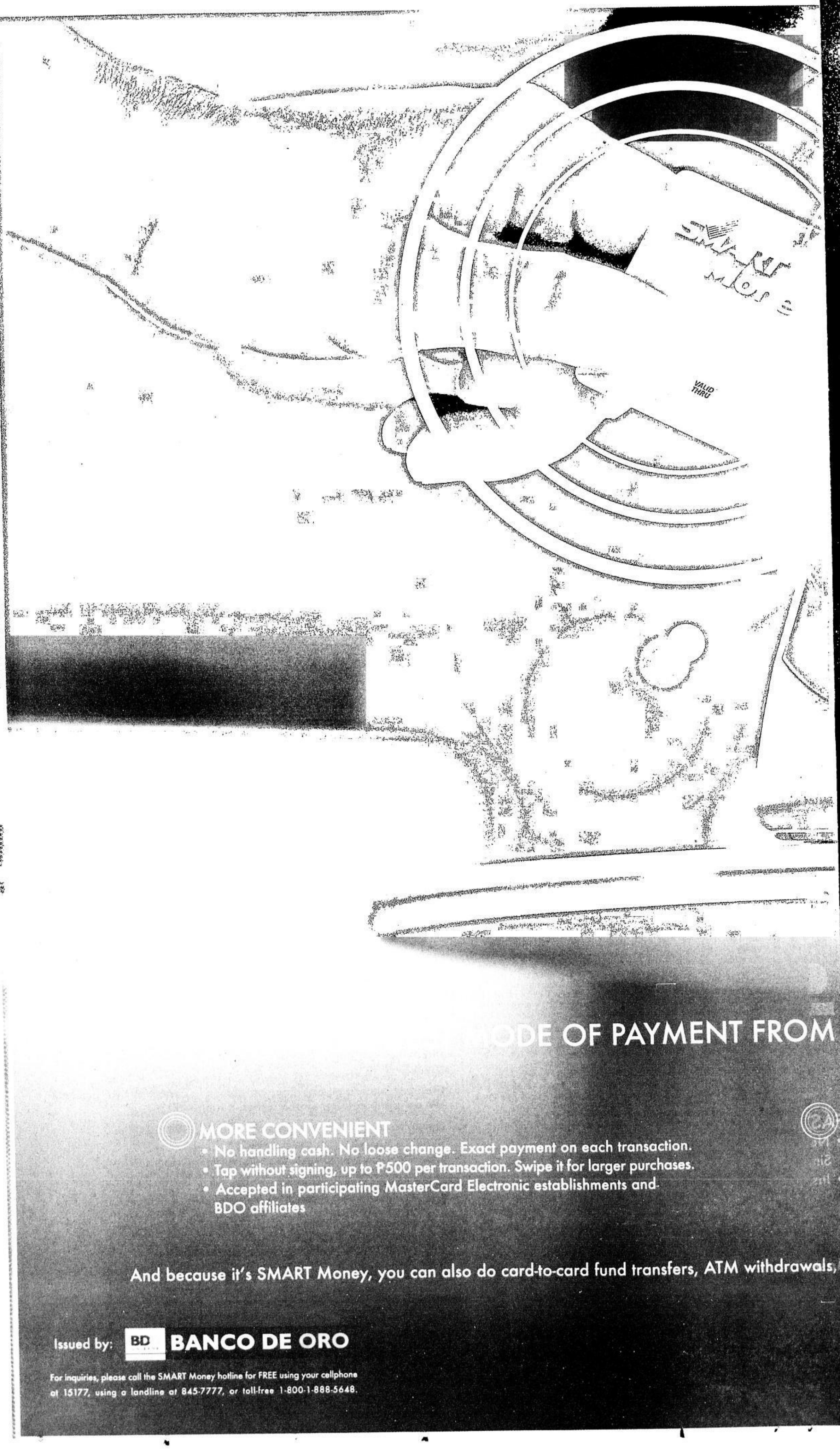

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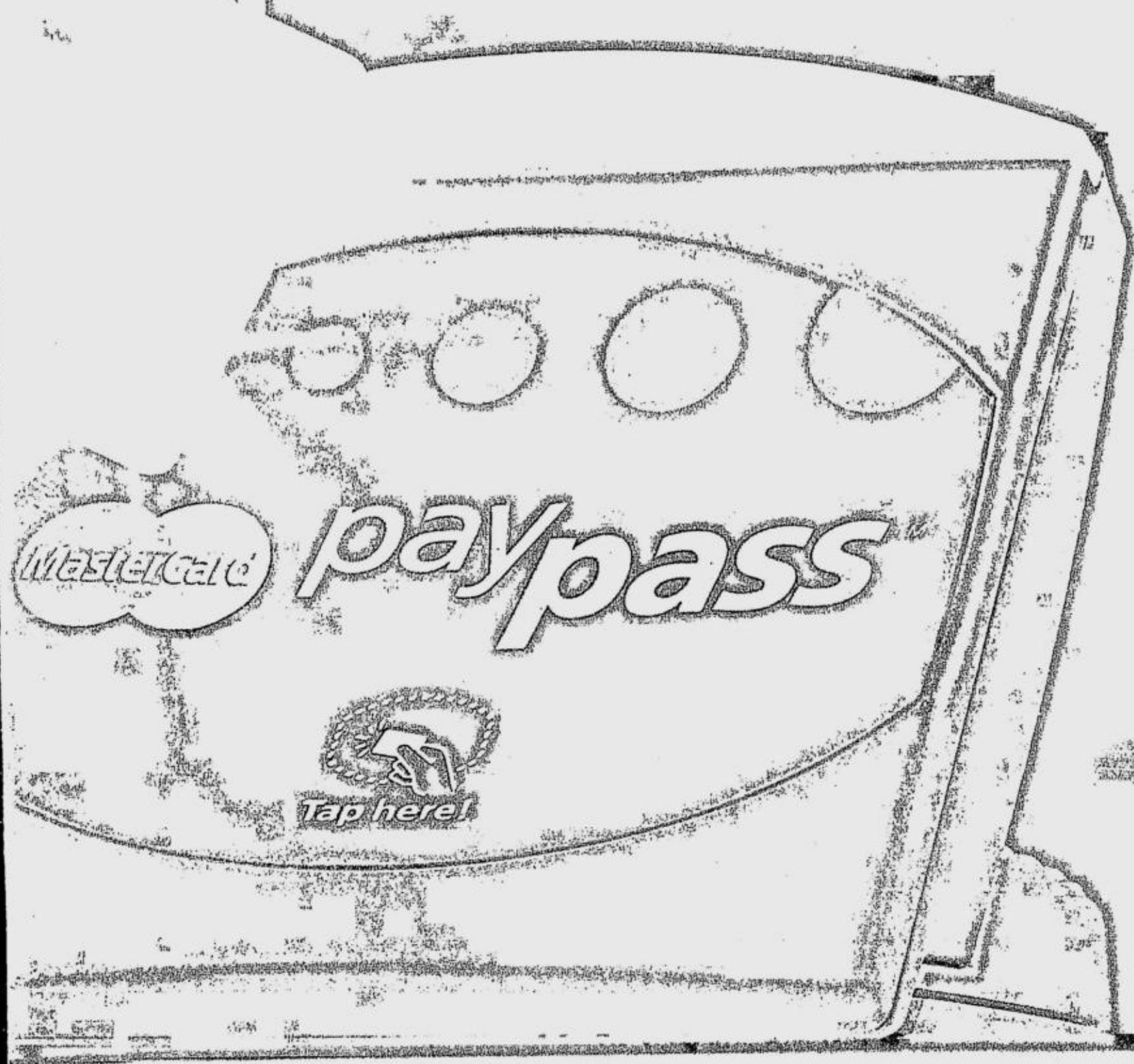

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Lessons from Nancy

EDITORIALS

OR HARRY, OR CHUCK, OR RAHM, OR HILLARY or any of the many other politicians who helped the Democrats regain control of the US Congress for the first time in 12 years.

When the leaders of the Democratic party (characterized as "jubilant" by the Washington Post, "exuberant" by the New York Times) took over the other day, the main spotlight fell on Nancy Pelosi, the first woman elected Speaker of the House (and thus second-in-line in the presidential succession).

Pelosi certainly knew how to command center stage; she shared it with her grandchildren. The result was one photo-opportunity after another, which not even the Republicans (who perfected the art of the photo-op) could begrudge.

There was much less flourish in the US Senate, when Harry Reid made the transition from Minority Leader to Majority Leader. In fact, much of the drama took place off the Senate floor, in the Senate gallery, where ex-President Bill Clinton, who came to attend wife Hillary Clinton's second swearing-in, loomed inordinately large.

The political opposition in the Philippines seized on the Democratic victory in last November's elections as a template for its own plans in the May 2007 mid-term polls. It will not be a perfect fit.

To be sure, the victory was welcome, even for those of us in media, because it offered yet more proof of democracy's capacity to renew itself. Democracy, the results told us, is fundamentally about accountability.

But that main lesson from the Republican debacle—from the "thumping," in George W. Bush's own description—is not necessarily the lesson that applies most to the Philippine situation.

Lost in last week's celebratory din was the role played by Sen. Charles Schumer and Rep. Rahm Emanuel, among others, to ensure that the Democrats would turn political opportunity into reality. Bush's unpopularity did not necessarily mean the Democrats would thump the Republicans at the polls; the landslide happened because politicians had laid the groundwork: choosing the right candidates, raising campaign funds, managing resources, crafting a common message and, not least, imposing discipline.

If the political opposition wants to reprise Nancy's star turn with the grandchildren, its leaders must do the hard work, out of the limelight. That is the lesson that applies.

Lessons for Bill

NOT WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON, BUT Admiral William Fallon, erstwhile commander in chief of the US Pacific Command. US President George W. Bush has reassigned him to head the Central Command, which oversees the conduct of US military forces in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

Fallon was in the news in our part of the world last month—for suspending the Balikatan military exercises scheduled for 2007 because of the custody issue involving Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith. He said he could not send his soldiers to a country that would not treat them well.

Could his hardball tactics be responsible for his new assignment? Stranger things have happened in the Bush administration; his decisive action—wrong-headed, in our view, but effective in terms of blackmailing the weak-kneed Arroyo administration—could have recommended him to Bush.

Never mind if Fallon's order suspending the exercises placed one convicted rapist above the imperatives of Bush's own war on terror. (If the objective of the war games is to strengthen the Philippine hand in the so-called second front, then putting the exercises off for the reason Fallon gave means the need for a regional counter-terrorism effort is not as pressing or as necessary as Washington insists. Apparently, the United States has the luxury of deferring counter-terrorism work.)

Now Fallon has the task of masterminding the "surge" in new Iraq-bound troops that Bush seems to want desperately. We could tell him he'll be sending more troops in harm's way: inadequate armor, mismanaged operations, a bungled counter-insurgency. Perhaps he'll call the war off?

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Watergate's 'Deep Throat'

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

ONE OF THE BEST PRESENTS I RECEIVED last Christmas was as usual a book from my daughter- in-law Melanie. It was the recently published work by Bob Woodward on "The Secret Man," who figured much, but anonymously, in the unraveling of the Watergate scandal during the '70s.

Watergate is largely unknown to the young people today but it is a familiar reminder of a significant event in US history that led to the forced resignation of an American President. All this could not have happened were it not for the investigative skills of two young reporters from the Washington Post. They examined more than the tip of the iceberg and discovered something that shook the entire nation and claimed the attention of the world.

It initially appeared as an ordinary burglary that received scant public attention and would have been forgotten as yesterday's newspaper. But it was not so regarded by Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, 30 and 31 respectively, who must have thought there was something less trivial than met the eye. Their journalistic instincts prodded them to look further into the robbery that ultimately revealed the shocking criminal involvement of no less than President Richard M. Nixon.

For the information of the younger readers, the burglary was committed in 1972 at the Democratic National Headquarters at the Watergate Building in Washington, D.C. Routinary and later more curious questioning aroused suspicion of the ties of the burglars with the Republican Party and prominent figures in as high up as the White House. Woodward and Bernstein then decided to make a closer investigation of what was turning to be a serious political issue.

In the course of their interview of scores of persons with possible information about the case, Woodward and Bernstein noted the efforts of the Nixon people to cover up and put an end to their inquiries. This encouraged them to dig deeper into the dirt that would sully the just reelected president and provoke his impeachment.

As public curiosity grew, Woodward received a call from a casual acquaintance who offered to secretly provide him with leads in their investigation. Woodward agreed to meet him covertly, in an underground garage and at an ungodly hour. This began the series of clandestine disclosures that solidified the criminal charges against Nixon and his confederates, many of whom, but not including Nixon, were convicted.

The informer's absolute condition was that his identity should remain secret, and Woodward had agreed. Without naming names, he reported the matter to Bernstein; and they subsequently shared their windfall with some of their Washington Post superiors. One of them, perhaps flippantly despite the seriousness of the occasion, called the confidential source Deep Throat. The name stuck, and was to keep many people guessing on who he or she really was.

"Deep Throat" was the title of a popular pornographic movie at the time, and "deep" in journalistic language imports the confidentiality of a source that should not be revealed or identified. Over the years, many books and articles have offered various guesses as to who Deep Throat was. Among the suspects were Henry Kissinger, Bob Haldeman, and other persons close to the president, but the real mystery man was never seriously considered.

The disguise was known not only to Deep Throat himself but to six others, namely, Woodward, his wife Elsa Walsh, Bernstein, Washington Post editor Benjamin C. Bradlee, his successor Leonard Downier Jr., and a Justice Department lawyer who correctly guessed the secret identity. All of them kept the mystery intact until it was revealed only after all of more than three decades.

Deep Throat was W. Mark Felt, according to his daughter Joan. He was the deputy director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, a position he occupied before and after J. Edgar Hoover's death. As such, he had access to and full control of all the files of the FBI and could have been the logical suspect as the whistleblower against Nixon and his gang. But he cleverly diverted such suspicion by taking a strong stand against the unknown informer and ordering his subordinates to take special efforts to expose him.

After the national trauma of Watergate and Felt's subsequent retirement many years later, Woodward felt there was no more harm in revealing the real identity of Deep Throat. So he decided to ask Felt to release him from his promise. He found Felt in California but not as the man he had known before. Felt had lost much of his memory and could not remember Watergate at all. Given the old man's condition, Woodward felt it would be unfair to ask for his consent to be at last revealed as Deep Throat.

This year, however, Woodward read that Joan Felt and their family lawyer had reported the death of Mark Felt and had identified him as the Deep Throat of the Watergate years. He immediately contacted Bernstein and the two of them went to the Washington Post to give it another scoop. Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, co-authors of "All the President's Men" and "The Final Days," had relied much on Deep Throat's help in exorcising the wickedness of Watergate. In a joint statement, they now confirmed that W. Mark Felt was, indeed, Deep Throat.

Searching

MOMENTS

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD

DURING A MEAL WITH SOME EX-SEMINARIAN friends, I was so edified to see one of them put more food on to the plate of the other ex-seminarian beside him. Unable to contain myself, I commended his wonderful brotherly gesture, whereupon he said: "Oh that. Well, I just miss my dog which I feed after every meal!"

* * *

It is always important to be asking why we do what we do. In other words, the motive makes the difference in the things we do. In today's Gospel (Mt. 2,1-12), we are told that not only the Magi from the East, but also King Herod were in search of the newborn King, but they had different motives. The Magi were searching for Him to adore Him, while Herod was searching to kill Him. Whatever you are doing or overdoing in your life, ask yourself today: "Why, oh why, am I doing these?"

* * *

Today is the solemnity of the Epiphany wherein the Lord was revealed and was manifested to all peoples. We are reminded today that there is a master plan by God, which is bigger than our petty and often selfish plans. Let us look for and follow the star that leads us to Him rather than be focused on the glaring spotlights of this world—spotlights that lead us to emptiness and misery. If you are not busy searching and finding God because you are so busy searching for money, power and fame, then you have missed the point, and you have missed a lot in this life.

* * *

We make Epiphany happen again whenever we lead others and allow others to lead us to God. Have you led anyone closer to God? Have you ever shared your spiritual life (not just your religion or your dogmas) with other people? Have you really reached out and listened to others of different creeds or cultures? One thing is sure: You can't find God alone and you can't find God on your own.

* * *

"No pain, no gain." This is true in our search for God. King Herod did not find the newborn King because he did not leave the comforts of his palace. The Magi found the newborn King because they diligently and seriously searched for Him. They sacrificed and they offered Him their gifts. What have you sacrificed for God? What have you offered Him?

* * *

It's not as if our search for God was a pure human initiative and endeavor. Not at all, for it is grace that begins, sustains and completes our search for God. More rightly, it is not we who search for God, but it is He who finds us. At any moment of our lives, grace is operative. All that is required of us is to be cooperative.

* * *

There will always be stars that will lead us to God. Today, let us thank God for all the people who have lighted our paths and have brought us closer to God. If we look back, it is the simple, humble, unassuming people who have touched our hearts and led us to the very heart of God. It is not the big "somebodys" but the little "someones" who have effectively and surely brought us to God.

* * *

Actress Chin-Chin Gutierrez is one shining star that has shown us what it is like to really love. We have heard of mothers loving their children, but here is one child whose constant concern was to care for her ailing mother. This love was shown concretely when she risked her own life to save her mother during a pre-Christmas fire that gutted their home. *Mabuhay ka*, Chin-Chin, for your love for your mother and for our Mother Earth.

* * *

And the search is on; the positioning is on for the May elections. This early, we already are seeing signs of how hot and how dirty the elections could be! When will we get a new breed of political leaders who know how to sacrifice for the country? Oh, brother! When will we have deserving and not just popular or moneyed candidates? When will we ever have leaders who will lead us to Him, and will help spread the values of God's Kingdom?

* * *

Anyone who has really found God must make a decision not to go back to his/her old familiar ways which lead to selfishness, sin and misery. Are there "Herods" in your life that enslave you? Depart from them. Are there "Herods" in our country that do not depart from us no matter what we do? Let us turn our backs on them and depart from them.

* * *

"Twinkle, twinkle little star, how I wonder what you are?" What sort of a star are you? Bright or black, super or simple, twinkling or fading; remember, keep on shining because people are searching, and God is watching.

* * *

The search is over. The Diocese of Abra has a new bishop in the person of our humble, diligent, prayerful, and smiling Father Provincial Leopoldo Jaucian, SVD. One with you! Shine on Bishop Jaucian!

* * *

Life is indeed full of happy and sad events. Don't give up on your faith for God will keep you afloat. Just remember to call on Him. For prayer requests, text FJREQ<your name> and send 2948 for Globe/Sun or 3940 for Smart. God bless you. Mama Mary loves you!

* * *

A moment with the Lord:

Lord, help me to keep on searching and to keep on shining. Amen.

Counting our blessings

REVEILLE

Ramon J. Farolan

SOME WELL-MEANING FRIENDS HAVE suggested several topics for my first column of the new year.

One felt very strongly about the midnight transfer of what's-his-name from a Makati jail to the US Embassy. He thought that we should call down the administration for its shadowy resolution of the matter.

Another reader, apparently a diehard basketball fan, wanted me to dwell on the Philippine Olympic Committee's failure to end the "leper status" of Philippine basketball in the global community. He bemoaned the fact that it has been more than a year since we got expelled by the Fiba.

Another caller from the military organization wanted to know whatever happened to the AFP modernization funds derived from the sale of Fort Bonifacio. He noted that the Commander in Chief has just announced a P10-billion modernization outlay for the armed forces. Good question, and a good reminder of how easily we forget.

But this being my first for the year, I thought I would rather dwell on counting the blessings received over the years and thanking the Almighty for getting us through 2006 in relatively good shape.

On top of the list is family—a patient and understanding partner, and three wonderful kids who have provided us with three equally wonderful grandchildren. The latest one is a Brazilian. In a phone conversation, when she tells me to go to sleep, it means she wants to go back to playing with her toys. They have always been our greatest blessing. And I am reminded of the prose of Khalil Gibran who expressed in beautiful lines the relationship between parents and children:

Your children are not your children
They are sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself
They come through you but not from you
And though they are with you
yet they belong not to you
You may give them your love but not your thoughts
For they have their own thoughts
You may house their bodies but not their souls
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow
Which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams
You may strive to be like them
But seek not to make them like you
For life goes not backward
nor tarries with yesterday
You are the bows from which your children
as living arrows are sent forth
The Archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite, and He bends you with His might
That his arrow may go swift and far.
Let your bending in the Archer's hand be for gladness
For even as He loves the arrow that flies
So He loves also the bow that is stable

Good health has enabled us to enjoy life in spite of a 10-year-old cardiac bypass and high glucose levels from time to time. Of course, our vocabulary has been enriched with new terms related to the functions of the prostate gland just below the bladder. Somehow, we have managed to adjust to the frequent needs of the times.

Golf and good friends have provided us with many delightful moments, which goes to show that you don't need millions to appreciate and partake of the good life. Now, if the next 360 days brings us a hole-in-one, it would be the high mark of my golfing career.

Books are blessings which we have often taken for granted. Now that the pace of life has slowed down, there has been more time for enjoying quiet evenings with a good book. Nothing heavy. My preference has been for historical narratives and biographies. Bob Woodward's series on the Bush presidency and the war in Iraq has been very informative. "Flyboys" by James Bradley is another. "Grandslam" by Mark Frost is the story of Bobby Jones and golf.

One of my great joys in visiting our grandchildren in America is spending time at some Barnes and Noble or Borders bookstore, just browsing at all the available literature that you missed while busy making a living. Fortunately, there is still time.

* * *

There are a number of resolutions I had intended to make for the new year but life is too short to be hemmed in by a lot of parameters. I would rather follow my father's advice: "Every situation in life should be addressed with moderation."

* * *

For the new year, I would like to recommend a good read: "The Audacity of Hope" by Sen. Barack Obama, one of the leading contenders for the US presidency in 2008. The phrase—the audacity of hope—was once used by his pastor in a sermon and Obama incorporated it in his electrifying speech before the Democratic National Convention in 2004. It was this speech which brought him to the attention of many of his countrymen.

In the book, Obama calls on people to "have the audacity to believe despite all the evidence to the contrary that we could restore a sense of community to a nation torn by conflict; the gall to believe that despite personal setbacks, the loss of a job or illness in the family or a childhood mired in poverty, we have some control—and therefore, some responsibility—over our own fate."

It is a message that clearly applies to us Filipinos as we start another year with so many unresolved issues before our people. We must have the audacity, the boldness to believe that a better life lies ahead of us even in the face of so many conflicts which continue to divide our people and hinder our progress as a nation.

Moot?

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

MOOT. THAT'S THE WORD USED BY THE Court of Appeals to describe the issue of custody of convicted rapist Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith. Of course, it was using the word in the sense of "not worthy of consideration or discussion because it has been resolved or no longer needs to be resolved" because with the "midnight" extraction of Smith from the Makati City Jail and transfer to the US Embassy, preceded by the signing of an agreement between the embassy and the Department of Foreign Affairs, there was nothing it could do to return Smith to Philippine custody.

But "moot" also means "subject to or open for discussion or debate, debatable." And if President Macapagal-Arroyo and her minions think the issue has been buried forever, like Smith, in the bowels of the US Embassy, it has another think coming.

The issue of Smith's custody—which has led to tangential issues like upholding sovereignty, the tension between national and international laws, the relationship between the courts and the executive—is still very much under debate, and still very much unsettled.

The latest in a string of public statements on the controversy is that of the Human Rights Center (HRC) of the Ateneo Law School, which condemned "the kowtowing by our government to the United States at the expense of the Rule of Law." The HRC added that "such blatant disregard for the judicial process and for the constitutionally enshrined principle of separation of powers is the height of betrayal of public trust."

The Center also took issue with the appellate court's description of itself as "the weakest amongst the ultimate guardians of the liberties and welfare of the people." On the contrary, the statement asserted, it is the Court's duty "to intervene and to take a strong and definite stand against any agreement that subverts the Constitution."

* * *

AS conclusion, the Center called on the Supreme Court, the highest body in the entire judicial branch of government and ultimate interpreter and defender of the Constitution, "to stand its ground and protect Philippine sovereignty." The statement argued that sovereignty "should be a matter of principle, not policy." Our nation's sovereignty, it said, is "not dependent on the beliefs or wishes of whoever is in power," and called on the government to begin a review of the VFA, "with the end in view of upholding our sovereignty and strengthening our democratic institutions, not undermining them."

A group of distinguished women, led by former senator Leticia Ramos Shahani, and representing organizations such as Cedaw-Watch, Women and Gender Institute of Miriam College and Isis International-Manila, pointed out in their statement that the case is not only an issue of custody, but also the government's will to uphold and protect our sovereignty. "How the government conducts itself ... will show how much the government is willing to abide by the provisions of the Constitution, in upholding the dignity of the Filipino people, in respecting our human rights and protecting the rights of women against violence."

Shahani and the other signatories also pointed out that the treatment of Smith so far is "discriminatory against all other Filipinos and aliens who have been convicted of rape," while his comfy incarceration (why, there are even curtains in his room!) "will render inutile the significance and consequence of the initial rape conviction." It also violates, they said, "Nicole's right to an effective remedy and freedom from impunity." The Philippines should guarantee that if the rape is eventually proven with finality, "there is accountability for the violence perpetrated, for the human rights violated."

* * *

MEANWHILE, lawyer Damcelle S. Torres, co-author of the books "Engendering the Philippine Judiciary" (written about in this space earlier) and "The Davide Court and its Contributions to Gender and Women's Rights," wrote in to say that although the Subic rape case is not mentioned in "Engendering," the case does get a mention in "Davide Court." (The other authors are Rowena V. Guanzon, Juline R. Dulnuan, Nicolas B. Pichay, Ma. Cecilia D. Papa and Torres.)

"The Davide Court," says Torres, surveys more than a thousand cases on rape, marriage, child support and similar gender issues decided by the Supreme Court during the term of retired Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., and "identifies underlying legal principles and personal assumption used by the Supreme Court in deciding the cases, marks shifts in perceptions in the decisions, and points out possible areas of inquiry for legal theorists as well as social anthropologists."

* * *

AMONG THE cases discussed in the book is "People vs. Salarza," where the Supreme Court acquitted the accused in a rape case filed by a young British woman who was "half-asleep" during the alleged rape. Then Associate Justices Davide and Florenz Regalado dissented, notes Torres, reasoning that the term "unconscious" cannot be tested by a mere physical standard of whether one is awake or asleep, conscious or alert. Rather, the inquiry should "determine whether the victim was fully informed of all considerations so as to make a free and informed decision regarding the grant of consent."

Writes Torres: "'The Davide Court' advocated for and anticipated the application of the 'Salarza' dissent in future cases, including the Subic rape case on Page 27 of the book. While the book was in press, Judge Benjamin Pozon convicted Smith of rape for admittedly having sexual intercourse with a woman 'whom he knew was intoxicated and was rendered unconscious by the accumulated effects of the different alcoholic drinks she has taken in succession at the time of the felony.' Judge Pozon did not cite 'Salarza' in his decision, but he laudably had the same mind as its illustrious dissenters."

An agreement hounded by the past

PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David

I WAS ONE OF THOSE WHO OPPOSED THE Visiting Forces Agreement when it was being negotiated during the final months of the Ramos presidency. I was convinced that the country did not need it; we faced no external threat. I also felt vaguely that it was not the right time to invite US troops back into the country. The conflicts generated by the US bases were still very fresh. We were just beginning to learn what self-reliance meant.

I was very disappointed that the newly-elected president, Joseph Estrada, supported the VFA. As senator, he had been one of the staunchest critics of the US bases. The wording of the agreement as ratified by the Senate left many contentious issues hanging. Among these were the issues pertaining to criminal jurisdiction and custody. They were the same issues that had caused so much public resentment against US forces during their long stay in the country. The VFA leaned heavily on the side of the US military authorities.

Its provision on custody is now the subject of a potentially disruptive controversy: "The custody of any United States personnel over whom the Philippines is to exercise jurisdiction shall immediately reside with United States military authorities, if they so request, from the commission of the offense until completion of all judicial proceedings. United States military authorities shall, upon formal notification by the Philippine authorities and without delay, make such personnel available to those authorities in time for any investigative or judicial proceedings relating to the offense with which the person has been charged. In extraordinary cases, the Philippine Government shall present its position to the United States Government regarding custody, which the United States Government shall take into full account. In the event Philippine judicial proceedings are not completed within one year, the United States shall be relieved of any obligations under this paragraph. The one-year period will not include the time necessary to appeal."

Philippine officials say this phraseology is standard in almost all status-of-forces agreements (Sofa) between the United States and other countries.

I wanted to know if this is true, and so I looked up the text of the Status-of-Forces Agreement between the United States and the Republic of Korea. The formulation is indeed quite familiar. This is how the 1966 US-ROK clause on custody reads: "The custody of an accused member of the United States armed forces or civilian component, or of a dependent, over whom the Republic of Korea is to exercise jurisdiction shall, if he is in the hands of the military authorities of the United States, remain with the military authorities of the United States pending the conclusion of all judicial proceedings and until custody is requested by the authorities of the Republic of Korea. If he is in the hands of the Republic of Korea, he shall, on request, be handed over to the military authorities of the United States and remain in their custody pending completion of all judicial proceedings and until custody is requested by the authorities of the Republic of Korea."

This paragraph was however amended in January 2001 to read as follows: "The custody of an accused member of the United States armed forces or civilian component, or of a dependent, over whom the Republic of Korea is to exercise jurisdiction, shall remain with the military authorities of the United States until he is indicted by the Republic of Korea."

It is important to bear in mind that, on account of its security problems with North Korea, South Korea has had to play host to US forces and facilities since the end of the Korean War. While indeed a growing number of young South Koreans today believe they are better off without the American presence, it is easy to see why Korea would do everything not to antagonize America. Yet, when it was necessary to do so, it did not hesitate to assert its sovereign rights if only to avoid irritants in the relationship.

The amended US-ROK Sofa is a very detailed document. One can almost imagine from its cautiously worded provisions the long trail of past misunderstandings that must have framed the review process. But, what I find particularly striking in the text is the delicate balancing of sovereign rights with the concern to maintain gracious relations with the other country. What comes out unambiguously is the mutual readiness to accede to any request or to set aside a prerogative in cases deemed particularly important by the other party. This seems to resonate an unspoken rule in diplomatic relations.

On close reading, one realizes how the US-RP VFA is itself infused with the same general tenor of graciousness—so antithetical to the pervasive distrust with which many Filipinos view relations with the United States. It is as if the feeling of having been repeatedly betrayed had lodged itself so deep in our collective psyche that we cannot rise above our resentments. Our lack of confidence in our own leaders' capacity to properly represent the nation's interests keeps us always on guard against other powers that might take advantage of our weakness. This poisoned attitude has prevented us from having a normal relationship with our former colonial master. But, curiously, it has not stopped us from bartering our sovereignty for some measly assistance.

I think I now have a clearer understanding of why I was from the start opposed to the VFA: we are not ready psychologically to deal with America. America rekindles our colonial instincts and resentments.

* * *

Comments to public.lives@gmail.com

Dancing with the devil

REBEL WITHOUT A CLUE

Patricia Evangelista

THERE'S A PICTURE IN YESTERDAY'S PAPER THAT HAS A grinning Jinggoy Estrada with his forefinger up in the air. Captioned "Flashing the No. 1 sign," he sits flanked by Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay and a resigned-looking Nikki Coseteng, who somehow gives the impression that she'd rather be anywhere else. I read somewhere that the reason there are so few women-politicians in the world is it's too much trouble to put makeup on two faces.

Crowded behind them are a reported 50-odd other aspiring senators hoping for an opposition slot. Even with what appears to be great effort on the part of the photographer, several people were cut out of the picture. There are a few who can be seen craning their necks at the back row. Others, further back, resign themselves to thrusting out fists in the No. 1 sign, probably desperately hoping that the public will recognize their most honorable forefingers.

They form the party of the United Opposition (UNO), whose symbolic head is no other than the deposed President Joseph Estrada.

There's a reason why parties exist—it's to bring together leaders who share the same political ideologies, to allow the public to select parties that represent their political ideology, and to allow those who do not have the machinery to run an opportunity to serve the people. Today's parties seem to have evolved into some sort of business—banks that lend out political capital to those whose personalities come with either telegenic appeal or name recall. Loans will be repaid in future favors, mortgaged on Filipino trust.

Richard Gomez appears to be one of the more favored clients, a tall, dark and handsome example of how there is nothing contemptible in politics. In 2003 he claimed he was willing to join Panfilo Lacson's opposition ticket "if somebody will finance my candidacy." After all, he said, "I don't want to spend my hard-earned show-biz money on a political venture." Recently, he has been seen having talks with the kingmaker Estrada himself. Asked in an interview which party he may possibly run under, he claims that it doesn't matter. If he has to run and win, he'll run with the party that has the best chance of winning. Once in power, the party won't matter—he will only be serving the "*milyon-milyong tao*" who would have voted for him.

I have nothing against actors running, if they have anything to offer besides being actors. In the same way, I have nothing against doctors or athletes running if I think they can offer more than amphetamines and boxing medals. Of course, Rep. Prospero Pichay takes the high ground and denounces the entire acting profession. "Is that how intellectually bankrupt the opposition is that they go for actors and actresses?" The good representative does not, however, take offense when it comes to running side by side with another "intellectually-bankrupt" colleague—Mike Defensor doesn't seem to have any qualms against getting actor Edu Manzano for the administration ticket.

Principle does not seem to be the priority for this election. Former Sen. Loren Legarda, who fought against Estrada during his impeachment to the point of tears, is now a sure bet in Estrada's magic stable of 12. Even good men are selling their souls. Sen. Joker Arroyo—the gentleman who chooses to answer his office phone himself to save government funds—was the lead prosecutor whose brilliance and bravery did much in turning the tide against Estrada during the impeachment. He's now, according to Estrada heir Jinggoy, an "applicant" for the opposition's favor. Does this mean all is forgiven with Estrada, or is it simply another manifestation of the Filipino's convenient amnesia? That Estrada is guilty is still up to the courts, yet these men and women have reduced into a joke the grand principles they and so many fought for in Edsa II—the same crime for which Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is guilty.

For what ends, I'm not sure. They cry good governance—but that should be the goal of any government leader. What is missing is their definition of good governance. Are they for or against abortion? Are they pro-religion or for secularism? Are they for privatization or government control? What are their priorities for funding—education, military, environment, or justice? Rep. Francis Escudero reassures the public that their candidates will be selected on the basis of issues, not personality. As to what these issues are, I have no idea.

The opposition's one issue, in the words of Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, is "anti-GMA and anti-administration." Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano, also under the UNO, claims it is a battle between good governance and corruption. It sounds familiar—after Edsa II, it was also a fight between good governance and corruption. Except that Ms Arroyo led the good guys, and Estrada was the devil incarnate.

I have little love left for the current administration, and would be quite happy when the madam in Malacañang is made accountable for the monumental human rights violations that I believe she has both aggravated and condoned. However, it's no excuse for the opposition to bank on the public's (justified) resentment.

Being a senator does not only imply standing in the way of whatever Ms Arroyo cooks up. They have the power and the responsibility to legislate. If their current stance is taken to its logical conclusion, all UNO essentially promises to do is to oppose any and all of Ms Arroyo's initiatives without necessarily instigating any constructive changes. Whatever they do decide on issues that have nothing to do with the President is up in the air, and the public voting for them has no way of reining them in.

Some argue that this is what the public wants, that Erap is their hero, and it is only realistic to go under his banner for the sake of winning. I agree that in the face of a monumental government machinery, a united opposition is important. However, to fail in the basic requirement of a legitimate and delineated platform is an insult to the public's intellect—an assumption that the public is incapable of critical thought. Yet even assuming that they are, it is a manifestation of the sad state of democracy that the educated take advantage of the public's lack of education instead of trying to raise the standard of democratic thought.

Theodore Roosevelt once said that the most successful politicians are those who say what the people are thinking most often with the loudest voice. Who knows, maybe one day, what we call the United Opposition will turn to GMA the next time the public finds someone to hate.

* * *

For comments, just text: PM REBEL name, age, location, message then send to 2948 for Globe/Sun and 3940 for Smart. E-mail at pat.evangelista@gmail.com

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TALK of the TOWN

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Editor Juan V. Sarmiento Jr.

Asian movers and shakers

KIM JONG-IL. SONTHI BOONYARATGLIN. PRIME MINISTER KOIRALA. Prachanda. Muhammad Yunus. Ban Ki-moon. Prince Hisahito. Dr. Margaret Chan. Laxmi Narayan Mittal. Taufik Hidayat. Ronato Alcano. Jung Ji-hoon. Michael Wong. Royston Tan.

They are among the personalities chosen by the Asia News Network (ANN) for making an impact on their respective fields in 2006. ANN is an alliance of 16 newspapers, including the Philippine Daily Inquirer, published in 14 Asian cities. It was organized to provide avenues for cooperation and to optimize coverage of major events in the region.

KIM Jong-Il

Enigma

Jokes have been made about the bad haircut, platform shoes and the outdated sunglasses. But on Oct. 9, when North Korea conducted a missile test defying the rest of the world, Kim Jong-Il must have had the last laugh.

No one has independently confirmed that the test was conducted or that North Korea has nuclear capabilities, yet it got the attention it wanted, especially from the United States.

But despite the headlines he had been creating across the world, Kim remains a mystery. Even his date of birth is unverified, just as the rumors about his family and his habits.

The son of "Great Leader" Kim Il-sung, North Koreans refer to Kim Jong-Il as "Dear Leader." According to his official biography, a rainbow and a new star appeared on the sky when he was born on Feb. 16, 1942.

As the leader of an impoverished, backward country, he has very little to bargain with the international stage.

But the talks on the North Korean nuclear crisis shows that one does not have to come from an advanced and wealthy country to get the world's most powerful leaders to the table.

SONTHI Boonyaratglin

Sonthi's coup

For better or for worse, Thailand's General Sonthi Boonyaratglin made a splash in Southeast Asia by launching on Sept. 19 a coup to oust Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, a democratically elected leader who was widely viewed as corrupt and divisive.

Thaksin's policy and tactics had driven a wedge between the people and government and had hijacked independent agencies for his own personal gain.

Sonthi acknowledged that a coup d'etat may not have been the most democratic thing to do. Nevertheless, he maintained that the military action was noble and true to the cause. The Thai Army chief, the first Muslim to be appointed to the powerful post, vowed to take down the network that took Thaksin years, and billions of baht, to put together. He also pledged to return the mandate to the people in one year's time.

Citing textbook democracy, a number of Western countries strongly criticized the coup. But at the same time, most Bangkok-based diplomats were quick to reach out to the new military-appointed regime.

PRIME Minister Koirala

Peacemakers

Nepal's Prime Minister

Girija Prasad Koirala played a leading role in the historic movement of April 2006 that is all set to turn the power structure of Nepalese politics upside down, pushing the 238-year-old monarchy decisively into the background.

Fifth-time prime minister Koirala's relentless struggle for democracy dates back 60 years. He participated in the popular movements for democracy in 1950 and helped lead the demonstrations in 1990.

A shrewd politician, Koirala has been the central figure in Nepalese politics through his role in bringing the Maoist rebels into the political mainstream. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed between the government and the Maoists on Nov. 21 formally put an end to the 11-year Maoist insurgency, which claimed more than 13,000 lives and nearly left the country a failed state.

In cobbling together the peace deal he won grudging admiration even from inveterate critics. Koirala's older brothers MP and BP Koirala were both prime ministers in their time.

The late BP Koirala is a legendary figure of Nepalese politics who devoted a lifetime to the struggle for democracy in the Himalayan country.

The octogenarian Girija Prasad Koirala is also president of the Nepali Congress, the grand old party of Nepalese politics, which has been at the forefront of the democracy movement in Nepal through all its ups and downs.

PRACHANDA

Maoist leader

The chair of the Communist Party of Nepal, Prachanda, whose real name is Pushpa Kamal Dahal, led the bloody 11-year Maoist insurgency in Nepal with an aim to topple the monarchy and replace it with a communist republic.

The insurgency claimed over 13,000 lives. Inspired by Peru's Shining Path, he launched the insurgency on Feb. 18, 1996. Prachanda was underground for the past 25 years and very little was known about him until recently. He was formerly a teacher and also worked briefly for the United States Agency for International Development. He was born in 1956 into a poor family in a village in central Nepal.

On Feb. 1, 2005, the king assumed executive powers in an attempt to crush the Maoist insurgency. Political parties were sidelined, giving rise to antimonarchy sentiment. Prachanda, tired of fighting the national army, realized that his goals were unachievable through rebellion and used the opportunity to reconcile with the parties.

The parties and the Maoists launched a movement against the king's rule in April 2006.

Prachanda emerged in public in June, weeks after the monarchy had its political powers stripped following weeks of nationwide protests. Since then the parties and the Maoists have reached a number of agreements, paving the way for the Maoists to join peaceful politics.

In a recent agreement among the political parties, the Maoists will control 73 seats in a 330-member interim legislature, which will be responsible for holding elections to write a new constitution.

MUHAMMAD Yunus

Nobel banker

Muhammad Yunus is the developer of the concept of microcredit, the extension of small loans to entrepreneurs too poor to qualify for traditional bank loans. He is also the founder of Grameen Bank.

In 2006, Yunus and the bank were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, "for their efforts to create economic and social development from below."

Yunus first got involved in fighting poverty during the famine of 1974 in Bangladesh.

He discovered that very small loans could make a disproportionate difference to a poor person.

In 1976, Yunus founded the Grameen Bank (Grameen meaning village) to provide loans to poor Bangladeshis.

To date, the Grameen Bank has issued more than $5.1 billion in microcredit to 5.3 million borrowers. To ensure repayment, the bank uses a system of "solidarity groups."

These small informal groups apply together for loans and its members act as co-guarantors of repayment and support one another's efforts at economic advancement.

As it has grown, the Grameen Bank has also developed other systems of alternate credit that serve the poor.

It also offers education and housing loans as well as financing for fisheries and irrigation projects, venture capital, textiles, and other activities, along with other banking services such as savings.

The Grameen model of micro financing has been emulated in 23 countries.

Many, but not all, microcredit projects retain its emphasis on lending specifically to women.

BAN Ki-moon

Veteran diplomat

A meeting with then US President John F. Kennedy led Ban Ki-moon, the new secretary general of the United Nations, to pursue a career in diplomacy.

As a high school student in 1962, Ban won an English-speaking contest and a trip to Washington where he met Kennedy. Forty-five years later, he is Kofi Annan's successor.

Ban, 62, is faced with the daunting challenges of reforming the UN, regaining trust in the world body and settling international crises over North Korea, Iran and other hotspots.

People close to him attribute his success to his diligence, adroitness and friendliness.

He has been acclaimed for his ability to mediate conflicting interests and for his knowledge of the UN.

Born in Chungju, Chungcheong, southwest of Seoul, Ban graduated from the prestigious Seoul National University in 1970.

He joined the Foreign Ministry in 1970 and served in many posts, including doing a stint as ambassador to the United States.

PRINCE Hisahito and family

Long-awaited heir

After 41 years, a male heir was finally born into Japan's royal family on Sept. 6, 2006. The country rejoiced and welcomed him with celebrations.

The birth of Prince Hisahito, the third child of Prince Akishino and Princess Kiko, has temporarily halted proposals that a female heir be allowed to ascend the Chrysanthemum Throne, the oldest continuing monarchy in the world.

The baby prince is third in the line of succession after his uncle, Crown Prince Naruhito and his father.

His name means "serene and virtuous" and though it remains to be seen what kind of an emperor he would be, he has undoubtedly calmed worries that the imperial throne will be without a male heir for long.

DR. MARGARET Chan

Calm in a storm

When the World Heath Organization chose Dr. Margaret Chan as its next director general during a special meeting of the World Health Assembly in November, it turned the spotlight on one of the hardest working health professionals in Asia.

Chan honed her skills at Hong Kong's Department of Health, where she was involved in developing and implementing policies, including containing and eliminating outbreaks of cholera and other chronic diseases.

It was during the outbreak of H5N1 —the human transmission of the bird flu virus—where she really proved her mettle.

Ordering the culling of the special administrative region's entire poultry stock, in the face of strong resistance from poultry farmers who feared for their livelihoods, took resolve.

Chan remained firm.

A smaller outbreak of the flu was stopped when it returned in 2003.

But when SARS emerged in late 2002 and struck with full force the following year, Chan was faced with containing an even more challenging adversary—one that ended up killing nearly 300 people in Hong Kong and infected thousands of others before it was finally stopped.

Chan later withstood accusations that she and the department had been slow to act.

She countered that declaring an emergency too soon would have led to widespread panic.

But by May 2003, with the SARS virus under control and the threat of a new outbreak diminishing, Hong Kong as a whole was commended by international health officials for the rapid containment of the disease.

Later that year, when the WHO picked Chan to lead its Department for the Protection of the Human Environment, it was an international recognition of her skills and success in battling the epidemic.

LAXMI Narayan Mittal

Steel man from India

His parents named him Laxmi after the Hindu goddess of wealth and prosperity, and Laxmi Narayan Mittal didn't fail his parents.

Today, he is the richest Indian-born tycoon in the land of his birth and in Britain.

Mittal hit global headlines in 2006 when his steel company successfully bid for France's Arcelor. He enjoys unparalleled foresight at picking up steel mills around the world.

At 26, his father sent him to Indonesia to oversee the family business. Even then, he already displayed rare insight in picking up his targets for acquisition.

He later parted ways with his father in 1995 and started to build his own steel empire.

One of his deals was the $220-million buyout of Sibala Mill in Mexico in 1992.

He followed it with similar acquisitions in the Caribbean and North America.

Ispat Mexicana gave him a firm base in North America.

His steel empire soon spread from Canada and Trinidad and Tobago to Kazakhstan and Indonesia.

TAUFIK Hidayat

Badminton's Becks

When people talk about international-level Indonesian shuttlers, one name invariably comes up—Taufik Hidayat.

Ask any budding player who their idol is, the answer will most likely be: Taufik Hidayat. So popular is he, that some quarters have anointed him "Indonesia's David Beckham." Taufik has good looks, is always striving to do his best on court, and manages to be both cool and flamboyant.

The 25-year-old has come a long way from being a farmer's son. He has done Indonesia proud many times by bagging a impressive slew of international honors, including Olympic and World Championship gold medals.

Most recently, he was named Player of the Year 2006 by the International Badminton Federation and has twice been proclaimed Indonesia's Sportsman of the Year.

To some officials at the Indonesian Badminton Association, Taufik is notorious as a rebel known to speak out his mind. Out of the badminton court, he is also known to be hot-tempered but inside it, he is calculated, cool, composed and collected, rarely lodging a protest with the referee or the linesmen.

RONATO Alcano

Pool master

When billiards aficionados were thinking of this year's possible World Pool champion, the name Ronato Alcano hardly cropped up.

So when the underrated player was victorious on Nov. 12, it could not have been more sensational. Bagging a coveted title and a cash prize of $100,000, 34-year-old Alcano became the third Filipino to win the title.

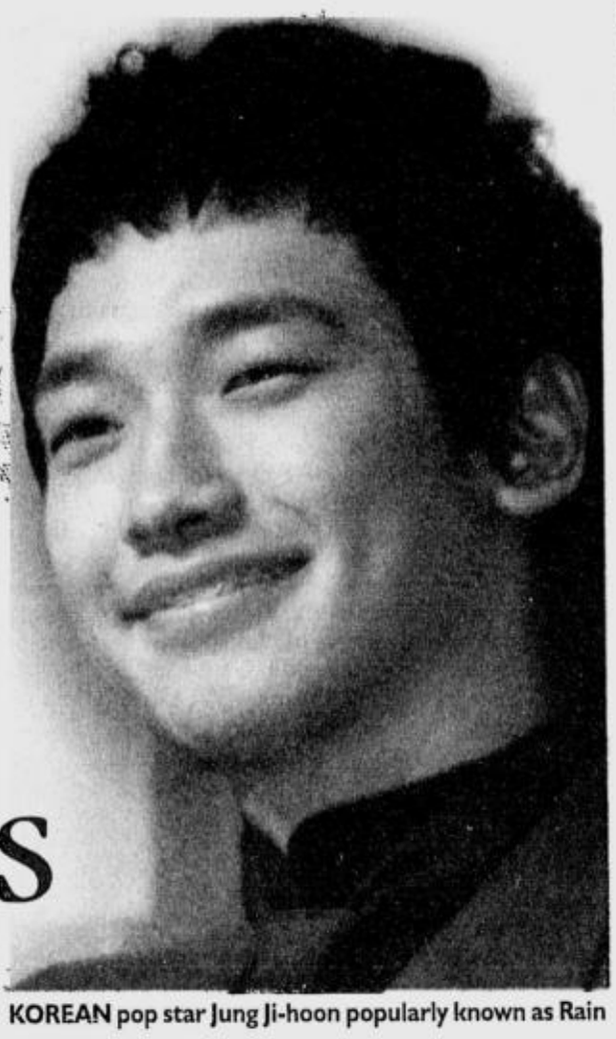
The dark horse's way to glory was not smooth. Born into a poor family, Alcano began playing billiards at 14. He later dropped out of school.

In 2002, he was chosen Rookie of the Year by Azbilliards.com, the leading billiards website based in the United States.

Last year, Alcano won the fourth and final leg of the SMB Asian 9-Ball Tour. With the earnings, Alcano's mother, Teresita, said her son might just buy a house.

They live in a 50-square-meter house that is bare of appliances save for a television set and two electric fans.

"I used to stop him from playing because he was skipping his classes just to play billiards. But now he's a champion, I don't regret the life he chose," his mother told the INQUIRER.



KOREAN pop star Jung Ji-hoon popularly known as Rain

King of K-pop

The year 2006 has been very eventful for Korean pop star Jung Ji-hoon, better known as Rain to his legions of fans.

In February, the 24-year-old king of K-pop sold out two shows at Madison Square Garden, New York City. Thanks largely to his killer body and flash dance moves, Rain has successfully built up a reputation in America, although some critics argued that he owes much of his immediate success to American pop stars such as Michael Jackson and Usher from whom he has drawn his inspiration.

Two months after his US debut, the multitalented star was named one of the world's 100 Most Influential People by TIME magazine, along with Condoleezza Rice, George Lucas and Russell Crowe. In a related article, the US Weekly called him a "Korean Justine Timberlake" and the "face of pop globalism."

On Dec. 15, he embarked on his "World Tour" that features 35 concerts in 12 countries over five months. Rain also made his big-screen debut in director Park Chan-wook's "I'm a Cyborg, But It's Okay," which is now showing in Korea.

The weather forecast is going to be wet for K-pop fans.

MICHAEL Wong

Breakout success

Born in Ipoh, Malaysia, singer Michael Wong, or Wong Guang Liang, began his journey into the world of music at a young age.

Wong, a devout Catholic, sang in the church choir during his school days and was once a choir teacher. After graduating, Wong began participating in performances and writing his own songs. He then moved to Kuala Lumpur to pursue a course in computer engineering, where his interest in the world of music composition began to blossom.

He took part in up to 30 singing competitions a year, where he managed to win several times. Finally noticed by Asia Pacific Music in the Pioneer karaoke contest, he joined forces with a college friend, Victor Wong, and formed a duo known more commonly in Malaysia as Michael & Victor or Guang Liang Pin Guan.

After releasing two solo albums on his own, Wong launched his much-anticipated album, Fairy Tale (Tong Hua).

Fairy Tale has proven to be his biggest single yet.

He is arguably the first Malaysian to win four main awards in the Chinese music scene's biggest award show, the Hong Kong TVB8 Golden Music Awards, held in December 2005.

ROYSTON Tan

Rebel with a cause

He's the errant artist who took on the Singapore censors; the David against the Goliath, so to speak.

When his 2003 debut feature film, "15," needed some snips—mostly because it features real secret-society chants and gang names—Royston Tan made a 12-minute satirical short, "Cut," which lampooned the censorship process.

For that, he has earned the label of Singapore's No. 1 rebel, thanks to media like BBC, CNN and The Guardian.

But, really, his talent is not about ruffling the authorities' feathers. Take "15." Both the short film and the feature film versions scooped up more than 10 awards.

In 2005, "Cut" was the best short film in the third Vladivostok Pacific Meridian Film Festival and the Canal+ Award winner at the Clermont-Ferrand Short Film Festival.

In December 2006, his second feature film "4:30" won the Grand Prix award for Best Film at the International Film Festival Bratislava in Slovakia and Best Film at the Rome Asian Film Festival.

It is little wonder he is sought after by Brad Pitt's production company, Plan B, as well as firms in Canada, Australia and France.

Yet, the Temasek Polytechnic graduate remains rooted in Singapore.

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INQUIRER *Mindanao*

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Nico A. Alconaba

Cotabato radio man appeals for help

By Jeffrey M. Tupas
North Cotabato

HE HAS WRITTEN letters to influential people, including President Macapagal-Arroyo, Vice President Noli de Castro, boxing hero Manny Pacquiao, and even celebrity and talk show host Kris Aquino.

Perhaps it is the desperation that gives him the strength to write letters to almost everyone who comes to mind and appeal for compassion.

At past 8 p.m. on April 10, 2005, a few minutes after he finished his program at the Manila Broadcasting Corporation's "Radio Natin," Alberto Martinez was attacked by two armed men in the town of Kabacan.

The suspects shot him twice in the back. One of the bullets went to his liver.

Almost two years later, Martinez, still with the bullet stuck in the liver, is now all skin and bones. From more than 60 kilograms, he weighed less than 40 kilograms when INQUIRER visited him in December.

Every day, he burns with fever because of an infection in his urinary tract, apparently brought on by a catheter that has been attached to him since.

Martinez, 49, who is also a pastor of the Church of God, sees himself deteriorating physically, an experience painfully shared with his wife and two young children.

Outrage

His 10-year-old daughter, Saskia Angelica, said she was outraged at what happened to her father. Every day, she sees how her father, who is paralyzed from his waist down, suffers.

"*Awang-awa na po ako sa tatay ko* (I really pity my father)," she said, expressing hope that he could be given medication. "I hope someone would pity and help us)," she added.

Beside Saskia is her father lying on a bed, his back full of sores for lying in bed a long time. He later said that despite having a wheelchair, he could not move and roam around their new safehouse in a village in Kabacan, North Cotabato, because he was very weak.

Martinez knew who his alleged attackers were—Cpl. Alvaro Obregon Jr. of the 75th Infantry Battalion of the military's 6th Infantry Division, Ronilo Quiñonez, and Romeo Araneta.

"I know them for quite a long time because they were my neighbors," Martinez said in his affidavit.

Before the incident, Martinez received several death threats in the form of letters and text messages. An anchor of the program "Magandang Gabi, Kabacan (Good Evening, Kabacan)," Martinez was known for his exposes on illegal gambling and the proliferation of illegal drugs in the town.

History

Kabacan has a long history of killings and other forms of violence which were often attributed to political rivalry or drug syndicates. Prominent political and public figures in the town were assassinated in the past. Grenade explosions and shooting incidents also happened even inside the compound of the University of Southern Mindanao (USM), incidents that claimed many lives of hapless students and civilians.

According to Martinez, he had all the reasons to believe that the suspects had an ax to grind against him. He recalled that a month before the attack, Araneta, whom he considers the mastermind, had threatened his life. He later reported the confrontation that ensued to the police.

"He thought I was the one who spread rumors about him that allegedly involved him in the proliferation of drugs in the town. I told him to file a case against me if he thought that indeed I was behind it but instead he told me '*Wala nang kaso-kaso ngayon. Maraming namatay na walang kaso* (There will be no cases now. So many have died without cases being filed in court).' Two Sundays after that incident, I was shot," Martinez said.

Reply

Almost two years after the incident, the suspects have remained at large. Because of this, he has sought help from the authorities and so far, only got a reply from the office of the Deputy Ombudsman for the Military and Other Law Enforcement Offices (Moleo), which all the more diminished the remaining hope in him.

Orlando Casimio, overall Deputy Ombudsman for the Moleo, said the multiple murder charges Martinez filed against Obregon "are now pending for review."

The last time the military contacted Martinez was in July last year when Lt. Loridel Barruga, administrative officer of the Philippine Army's Office of the Army Provost Marshal, sent him a letter and asked for his sworn statement and list of evidence to back his allegation against Obregon.

While he was still in the intensive care unit of a government hospital in Davao City, Martinez was visited by then Philippine National Police Chief Arturo Lomibao who also committed to help him.

"I am saddened and disheartened by this. It has almost been two years and yet the case is still pending for review. The suspects are still enjoying their freedom while I am getting weaker and weaker every day," Martinez said.

"I have also sought the assistance of many influential people including President Arroyo and the Vice President Noli De Castro but until now there is no reply," added Martinez, perhaps in his desperation, also sent letters to Pacquiao and Aquino.

Justice

But he has not given up hope. "I am not yet giving up on all of these. I need to be strong for my wife and children. Somehow, I can still feel that I will be given justice and that those who are responsible for this will have their time to suffer, too," he said.

Martinez was worried about his children not being able to finish college because of his ordeal. Saskia and her 9-year-old brother, Mark Angelo, were both at the top of their respective classes.

When Martinez stayed in a government hospital in Davao for more than a year after the incident, Geraldine had to work as a cook in a small restaurant to provide for the family needs. She also resorted to doing other people's laundry.

She admitted that her husband had not been taking medicine for quite a time now.

"*Hindi ko na kasi siya napapakonsulta sa doktor at hindi na rin siya umiinom ng gamot kasi wala nga po kaming pambili* (It is because I haven't brought him to a doctor and he has not been taking medicine because we don't have money)," Geraldine said.

No regrets

But despite what happened to him, Martinez said he has no regrets.

"*Hindi ako nagsisisi. Kung babalikan ko ang lahat, pipiliin ko pa ring maging tagapaghatid ng katotohanan sa mga tao hinggil sa katiwalian at kabulukan ng lipunan* (I have no regrets. If I have to go back, I will still choose to be the messenger of truth about the anomalies of society)," he said.

The National Union of Journalists of the Philippines listed at least 82 journalists killed since the return of democracy in the country in 1986. The latest victim of these killings was Laoag broadcaster Andres "Andy" Acosta who was stabbed to death in Batac, Ilocos Norte in December last year.

Acosta was the 12th journalist murdered in 2006 and the 48th victim since Arroyo assumed presidency.

NUJP secretary general Rowena Carranza-Paraan said the organization has sent cash support to Martinez to help him defray his hospital bills after he was shot 20 months ago.

Appeal

She appealed for more support so that the bullet in his liver will be removed.

In a letter addressed to Pres. Macapagal-Arroyo and other Malacanang officials, the NUJP also said Martinez's complaint against the suspects has not yet been filed in court, and that his request for inclusion in the Justice Department's Witness Protection Program not yet been acted upon.

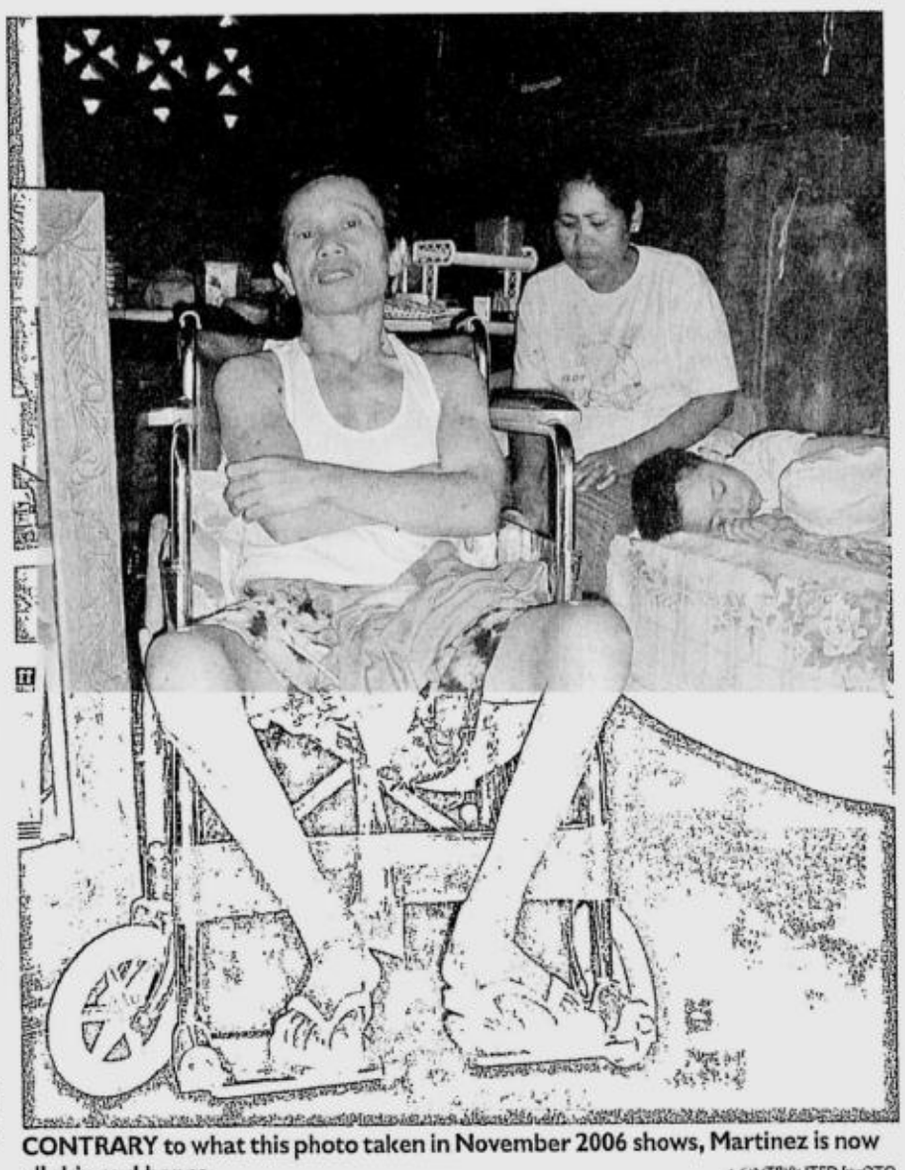
The NUJP said "the government should act with haste on Mr. Martinez's complaint," since he continues to receive death threats.

He is able to live "only because neighbors try to help ensure his security," the NUJP said.

The group also urged the Department of Justice to prod the military to complete its investigation of one of the suspects, Obregon.

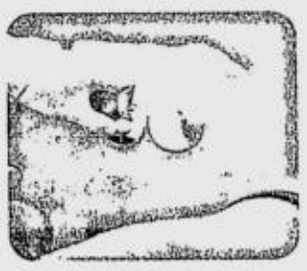
***

Those who want to help Martinez may ask for his telephone number from the NUJP at (02)411-7768.



CONTRARY to what this photo taken in November 2006 shows, Martinez is now all skin and bones. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

'I need to be strong for my wife and children. Somehow, I can still feel that I will be given justice and that those who are responsible for this will have their time to suffer, too'



▶ IT BREATHES

▶ IT HAS A PULSE

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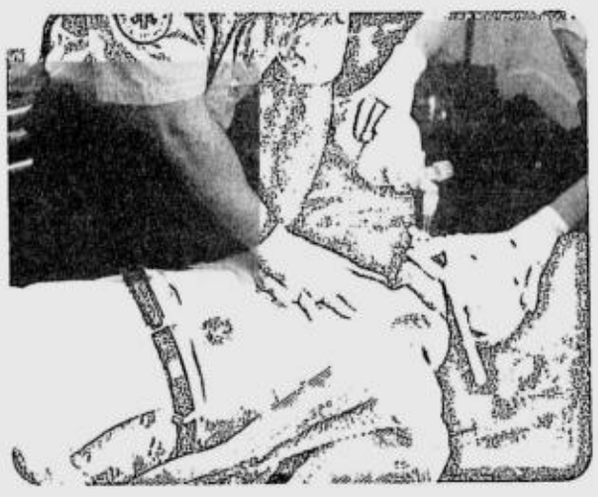

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Cops tag MILF men in Cotabato blast

COTABATO CITY—POLICE HAVE TAGGED TWO leaders of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Friday's bomb attack that injured three people here.

Senior Insp. Samson Obatay, city police spokesperson, said based on intelligence information, MILF commander Said Pakiladato and his deputy, Ustadz Hawon, were responsible for the explosion that occurred outside a refreshment parlor along the busy Makakua Street here around 11 a.m.

The explosion—caused by an improvised explosive device fashioned out of a 60 millimeter mortar shell—also damaged property, including two cars.

Two unexploded bombs were also recovered near the blast site.

Obatay said Pakiladato and Hawon, leaders of the 105th MILF Base Command, had carried out the attack in the name of the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI).

"They were trained by the JI. And like in previous bombings, including those in Tacurong, Sultan Kudarat and Makilala, North Cotabato, they were involved," Obatay said.

Pakiladato has also been tagged as mastermind in the 2003 explosion that killed Datu Piang Mayor Saudi Ampatuan.

But Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, said Pakiladato and Hawon had no hand in Friday's explosion here and in other attacks blamed on them by authorities.

"We do not know where these intelligence reports about their alleged involvement are coming (from) but they are definitely not involved in any of the incidents mentioned," Kabalu said.

He said authorities should investigate further before implicating any MILF leader in the bombings because doing so without basis could further endanger the peace process.

The peace talks hit a snag over the issue of territory and its resumption remains uncertain.

"We have no reason to sow terror. We are not into terrorism just to advance our organization. We are the usual suspects whenever there are terror attacks in the country. We are always their scapegoat," Kabalu said.

Obatay said the pieces of information the police received had basis.

Kabalu said the explosion could be a warm up for the elections but he did not elaborate.

"It was relayed to us by our sources," he said.

Last month, the MILF also protested the filing of charges against 23 rebel commanders in connection with the Makilala bomb attack that left eight people dead.

"It was agreed before that all MILF (leaders) included in the case, not only (chair Murad Ebrahim) would be removed from the list," Kabalu said.

Among those charged by a government prosecutor were Kule Mamagong alias Ustadz Kule, Hadji Akmad Bayam; Biznar Salahudin; Daud Sarip; Atti Lintungan alias Ustadz Atti; Samsudin Demaalo alias Commander Platon Blah; and Ahmad Akmad Batabol Usman alias Abdulbasit or Basit Usman; Zahide Abdul alias Zabiri Abdul or Bedz; and Usman Al Majad.

"We have nothing to do with the bombing as what we have said before. This is a form of harassment. We are protesting," Kabalu said. *Jeoffrey Maitem, Inquirer Mindanao*

6 N. Samar towns placed under state of calamity

By Joey A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—THE NORTHern Samar provincial board declared on Friday six towns in a state of calamity as the death toll in floodings in the province rose to 12.

The provincial board declared the state of calamity in the municipalities of Mondragon, San Roque, Pambujan, Silvino Lobos, Catubig and Catarman, the provincial capital, upon the recommendation of Northern Samar Gov. Raul Daza.

With the declaration, through a resolution approved during their regular session Friday, these towns could now avail themselves of financial assistance from the provincial government, according to Board Member Maritess Gillamac, chair of the committee on appropriations.

"These towns, on their own, have already declared a state of calamity," Gillamac, former mayor of Silvino Lobos, said.

The provincial government has about P25 million in calamity funds, which is insufficient to repair the damages that the six towns and others experienced due to the week-long flooding.

Based on the report of the Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council, chaired by Daza, the damage to agriculture and infrastructure in the province is worth almost P200 million.

The death toll due to the flooding increased to 12, when the body of 14-year-old Emmanuel Soriano, who was reported missing in a landslide in Barangay Diit de Suba in Silvino Lobos, was found in a creek in the barangay on Jan. 4.

In a report by the PDCC to the regional Office of Civil Defense two more bodies were also retrieved in the towns of Catubig and Pambujan.

Rey Gozon, administrative officer of the regional OCD, identified them as Tomas Ortonero, 63; and Reynaldo Bantilo, 27.

At least 12,000 families were displaced by the floods.

SLEEPING BEAUTY EV ESPIRITU/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

Village elder Victor Baculi crosses one of the most scenic watershed areas in the Cordillera. This river view in Tinglayan town, Kalinga provides a good view of the mountain fondly called Sleeping Beauty. But the watersheds are in danger of being wiped out, according to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

All Subic fish cages removed soon to clear congested bay

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—THE 94 remaining illegal fish cages in the municipal waters of Subic, Zambales, will be dismantled on Wednesday, giving small fishermen their right to fish again in that part of the bay.

Lormelyn Claudio, chief of the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) in Central Luzon, said she issued the final demolition order after a meeting here on Friday with the multipartite monitoring team (MMT).

Members of the team are Zambales Vice Gov. Ramon Lacbain II, representatives of the Samahang Pinagkaisa sa Pangisdaan ng Olongapo, Subic at San Antonio (Sapsap) and the Subic Bay Resorts Association (Subra).

Claudio said she asked the Philippine National Police's maritime office, Philippine Coast Guard and the local police to help in the demolition.

The 94 cages were what remained of the 200 illegal pens that the EMB ordered closed on Aug. 29 last year for lack of environmental clearance certificates (ECCs) and complaints for pollution.

The six operators dismantled half of those, it was learned.

She said she expected no violent resistance from the operators on Wednesday as they had been properly informed about the demands of the MMT.

The demolition team, however, has been advised to take caution because fishermen reported seeing some armed men in the disputed areas.

Asked why it took the EMB four months to fully implement the closure, Claudio said her office had to deal with the opposition of the Subic Fish Cages Operators Association (Sufcopas).

"They made false claims that areas of less than a hectare are not covered by the environmental impact system and thus cannot be covered by the cease-and-desist order," she said.

Lacbain's research, she said, helped the EMB strengthen the bases of its closure order. *Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*

Women veggie traders get act together

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—TIRED of being at the losers' end of a trade system that relies on unstable prices and verbal contracts, this town's women traders have decided to unite to protect and improve their lot.

In a meeting on Friday at the trading post here, the women, called disposers, agreed to come up with a truck queue and price monitoring system and a contract scheme that would safeguard their transactions and legal rights in the vegetable trade.

They also agreed to petition the town council to pass the vegetable trading post code that would set in place a more organized and systematic trade system for all farmers, disposers, buyers, truckers, purchase assemblers and dealers.

The women are actually considered middlemen, said Dominador Dongla, trading post chief inspector here. But he said the trade system has fixed their role as disposers, or those who look for buyers of the farmers' vegetables.

"Men as disposers are rare. The job is a woman's world," said Dongla.

He said more than 2,000 disposers here do their rounds daily at the trading post, parking spaces, open lots and private trading areas.

They can be easily spotted amid piles of vegetables and lines of trucks holding notebooks and pens and usually wearing belt bags while farmers unload their vegetables.

Through their hands pass the sale of around 1.5 million kilograms of vegetables unloaded daily at the more than 9,000-square meter trading post, Dongla said.

Councilor Reynaldo Postino of Kibungan town and Jonathan Tercero, president of the Bagsakan Traders Association, advised the women disposers to study the possibility of imposing an accreditation system and requiring the posting of a bond for traders and buyers.

The women complained that the same kind of vegetable is sold at different prices and that there are buyers who refuse to honor their dues on vegetables sales.

They also said the checks given by buyers often bounce, leaving the women helpless as the drawers are usually from Metro Manila.

In an earlier interview, Benedicto Hipolito, president of the Benguet Traders and Truckers Association, warned of the so-called midnight buyers, or those new faces who come up to buy tons of vegetables but have no intention to pay farmers and disposers.

Most of the vegetable transactions here are done verbally or are merely listed in notebooks.

"The trade system here has become so big that the present trading post ordinance needed to be revised and expanded," said a disposer. *Delmar Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

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'Fireworks best way to showcase culture'

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THERE IS NO MORE DAZZLING WAY TO SHOWcase a country's culture than through a fireworks display, according to Roberto Crisostomo, organizer of the ongoing nine-nation pyrotechnics competition.

The World Pyro Olympics, which is being held at the Esplanade area of the Mall of Asia complex in Pasay City, began on the weekend of Jan. 5 and will continue on Jan. 12 and 13.

Teams from Australia, the defending champion, showed their stuff on Friday, together with Poland, eliciting oohs and ahhs from the crowds that gathered at the baywalk.

Teams from the United States and Spain competed yesterday while the United Kingdom and Germany will exhibit their pyrotechnics today.

"There is something in the fireworks display that reflects the participating country's culture," Crisostomo told the INQUIRER in an interview Friday night.

The US team would usually begin with big and powerful shells (a mix of explosives in each pyrotechnic) which would reflect their status as a world power, he said.

Spain's fireworks display, on the other hand, would be lively and flashy—which would show the country's penchant for fiestas, he added.

A precise, very orderly and systematic medley of colors and blows, producing a march-like tempo, will fire up the skies when the team from Germany mounts its show tonight.

A similar display is expected from Denmark which takes center stage with Canada on Jan. 12 while China will do its brightest on Jan. 13.

Australia, on the other hand, took "spectators on a slow, melodious ride" using shells of different tones.

"This is really a coming together of all cultures. Unlike in other international fireworks competitions where teams are given a week each for their show, here they can actually get together because we hold everything in one week," said Crisostomo, who is also the vice president for marketing of La Mancha Pyro Productions.

The Makati-based company staged the New Year's Eve countdown at the Makati Central Business District, the first World Pyro Olympics held last year, and the fireworks festival in Manila in 2003 and 2004.

CBCP conference to focus on bioethics, family

SOME OF THE WORLD'S LEADing experts in bioethics and biomedicine will be in Manila on Jan. 9 for a two-day international conference on bioethics and the family.

Organized by the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), the conference will focus on the challenge of biotechnology to human life and the family.

"This is the first conference of such international magnitude organized by the CBCP on the subject, under the direct charge of the office on bioethics," said CBCP president Archbishop Angel Lagdameo.

Malolos Bishop Jose B. Oliveros, who heads the bioethics office, will chair the proceedings.

Leading the experts is the Vatican's well-known bioethicist, Bishop Professor Elio Sgreccia, president of the Pontifical Academy for Life at the Holy See.

Sgreccia, who has authored volumes of authoritative text on bioethics, will give the keynote speech at the conference to be held at the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel in Mandaluyong City.

Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales will deliver a second keynote address, focusing on the family.

Archbishop of San Fernando, Pampanga, Paciano B. Aniceto, who is chair of the Episcopal Commission on the Family and Life, will deliver a welcome statement, while Archbishop Fernando Filoni, the Apostolic Nuncio, is expected to deliver a papal message.

Dr. James L. Sherley, M.D., Ph.D., professor of biological engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, will deliver a paper on stem cell research, covering its scientific and ethical aspects.

William Lee Saunders, who holds a master's degree in law from Harvard University and heads the Center for Bioethics at the Family Research Council in Washington, D.C., will discuss cloning, genetic engineering and nano technology.

Dr. John Willke, M.D., chair and president of the International Right to Life Federation, will undertake a global review of the various challenges to the family, from contraception and abortion to euthanasia.

Patrick F. Fagan, family and religion expert at the Heritage Foundation, Washington, D.C., will contribute a paper on the future of the American family, and the state of marriage and the family around the world.

LAGDAMEO

OLIVEROS

SGRECCIA

Prof. Richard Wilkins, a well-known international law expert from Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, currently running the Doha Institute for Family Studies and Development in Qatar, will examine the prospects for international cooperation on human life and the family.

John Klink, president of The International Catholic Migration Commission, will discuss international organizations, reproductive health and human cloning.

John Smeaton, national director of the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC) in London, will present a paper on the future of the European family.

Cotabato Archbishop Orlando Quevedo, former CBCP president and incumbent secretary general of the Asian Bishops Conference, will present a paper on the future of the Asian family.

Fr. Fausto B. Gomez, president of the Southeast Asian Center for Bioethics and member of the Pontifical Academy for Life, will deliver a paper titled, "The Dignity of the Human Embryo: Bioethical Implications of the New Bio and Reproductive Technologies."

Former Sen. Francisco S. Tatad, governing board member of International Right to Life Federation (IRLF) and the World Youth Alliance (WYA), both US-based international NGOs, will present a paper on the trend of civil legislation on human life and the family in light of advances in genetic engineering and biotechnology.

IRLF board members from other countries, who will be holding their annual board meeting in Manila, will form the panel of reactors, along with some members of Congress.

They include Jim Hughes of Campaign Life Canada; Lech and Ewa Kowalewski of the Polish Pro-Life Movements; Talmir Rodriques of the Family Life Promotion of Brazil; Bert Dorenbos of Schreeuw om Leven in Holland, and Catherine Cotton of the Australian Pro-Life Movement.

The Filipino reactors, led by Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr., include Representatives Abraham Mitra of Palawan, Hermilando Mandanas of Batangas, Edmundito O. Reyes of Marinduque, Eduardo Zialcita of Parañaque, and Dr. Edna Monzon of the UST faculty of medicine

For more information, you may e-mail Ma. Fenny C. Tatad at fctatad@yahoo.com or the Episcopal Commission on the Laity, c/o executive secretary Ernie M. Burdeos or assistant secretary Joseph Jesalva at laiko_phils@yahoo.com.ph or call tel. 527-5388 or telefax 527-3124.

FVR adviser calls GMA family-planning policy harmful, un-Christian

By Norman Bordadora

A SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ADVISER TO former President Fidel V. Ramos has branded the Arroyo administration's natural family planning-only policy as "harmful, un-Christian, undemocratic and unconstitutional."

Benjamin de Leon, president of the Forum for Family Planning and Development Inc., said a national population program "based purely on abstinence was totally unrealistic and not normal."

Ramos, an ally of President Macapagal-Arroyo, recently described the administration's population control policy as weak. He said an aggressive family planning program was needed so the economy could grow faster.

"The NFP-only policy is harmful to the Filipino people ... it can only lead to an explosion of early and unwanted pregnancies, as well as thousands of additional abortions," De Leon said.

He added that scandals in the Catholic Church as reported in media showed that some priests, despite their education and values formation, found it difficult to practice abstinence.

ARROYO

Difficult for the 'average' Filipino

It would be more difficult for "the average Filipino who has had less education and values formation," De Leon said. "And now we are adopting this NFP-only policy?"

"The policy is un-Christian, undemocratic and unconstitutional because it violates freedom of choice—a fundamental human right recognized not only by our Constitution and democratic framework but, above all, by God," he said.

"The facts from various studies are staring us in the face. About 250 Filipino children, aged less than 5 years old, die every day because their parents are too poor to provide their most basic needs. Fifty-two percent of married Filipino women still do not practice any form of family planning," De Leon said, outlining the need for a more aggressive family planning policy.

"More than three million young Filipinos, 15 to 24 years old, engage in premarital sex. Seventy-four percent do not use any contraceptives. About 400,000 unsafe abortions are done every year in the Philippines. That's about one abortion per minute," he added.

De Leon said that during a population summit in December, government officials promoted NFP as the fundamental population policy of Ms Arroyo — not the modern family planning methods such as tubal ligation, vasectomy or the use of condoms, IUDs and pills.

No to artificial family planning

"The Arroyo administration will spend millions on NFP but will not spend a single centavo on artificial/modern family planning methods," he said.

"Our group is actively pushing for a national population policy and program that will aggressively promote all medically safe and legal family planning methods, both natural and artificial, provided that none of the methods promote abortion as a family planning method," De Leon stressed.

The couples' freedom of choice would be consistent with their religious and cultural beliefs, and their values would be fully respected, he said.

"It is the fundamental and constitutional duty of government to properly manage the nation's population and the Philippine Constitution explicitly identifies the family as the foundation of society," De Leon said.

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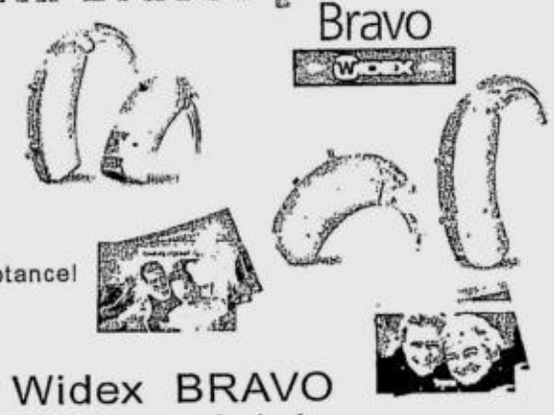

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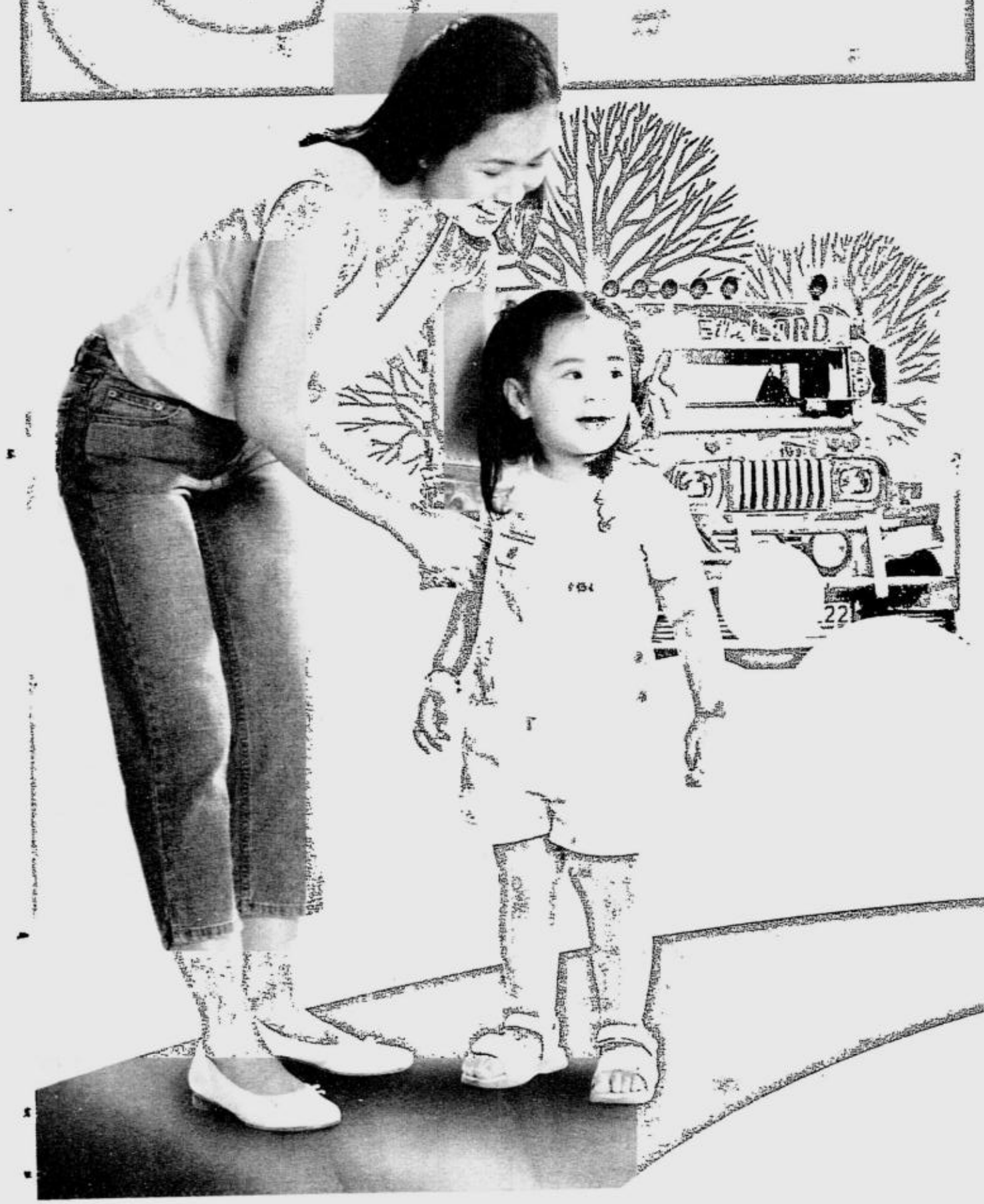

PGMA and Sen. Arroyo help bridge OFW families

Last Christmas, thousands of Filipinos came home to be with family and friends. For some of them, it was the first time they were ever home after how many years of working in the Middle East.

This month, most of them will report back to work in Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Qatar.

Even though they will be away from their families again, they don't have to feel like they're leaving them behind. Thanks to Globe's lower IDD rates to Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Qatar.

This special US$0.20 PER MINUTE rate was made possible with the help of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, through a project initiated by Senator Joker Arroyo, the Senate, DOTC, and the NTC.

Globe Brings Filipinos Everywhere Closer to Each Other

Aside from those countries, Globe provides a more affordable IDD rate to the 12 most popular destinations namely US, Canada, China, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand, South Korea, Taiwan, Australia, United Kingdom and Kuwait—only P0.17 per second. Pinoys here can now call as often as they like and still feel the closeness of their friends and kin despite the distance.

On top of this, Globe introduced the reduced IDD rate of US$0.30 per minute to Japan for all Globe Kababayan registered members and TM subscribers ; the P7.50 per minute off-peak rate to US and Canada; and the P7.50 per minute IDD to selected Bridge Mobile partners such as Singtel in Singapore, CSL in Hong Kong, Maxis in Malaysia and Taiwan Mobile. For Singtel, Globe has a special rate of P1 per international text message.

For the rest of the world, the per second IDD charge is US$0.0067, another pioneering price scheme introduced by Globe during the early part of last year. The same rate applies to 3G Video IDD to 40 countries.

See how much they miss you

3G Video IDD is expected to make a huge impact on OFWs, especially those who have not seen their families for years. With 3G Video IDD, families separated by distance can finally see each other anytime and even get a chance to actually share special moments together.

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Photo source: Philippine Senate website

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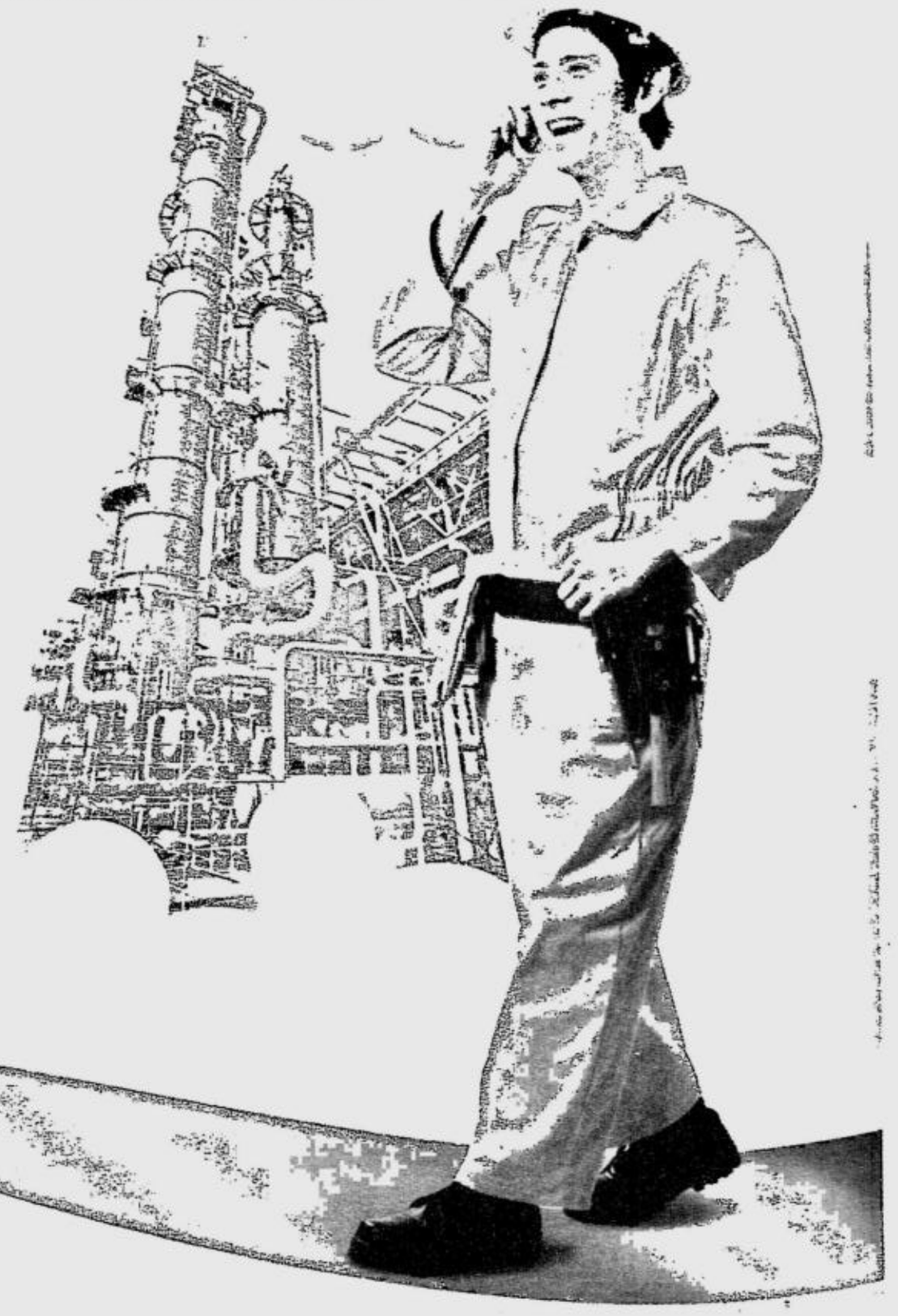

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A man for many seasons

By Amadís Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

IN A RELATIVELY YOUNG LIFE, Dr. Teofredo T. Esguerra—Ted to friends—has chalked up a host of accomplishments in the field of medicine and in the arts that leaves one amazed.

Esguerra, 38, is a physician specializing in expedition and wilderness medical services, with training acquired in a British-run hospital in Saudi Arabia; a trekker with the First Philippine Expedition to Mt. Everest in May last year; a singer (first tenor), lyricist, arranger, songwriter and musician who can play a wide array of instruments, Western and indigenous; a poet in English and Filipino, a visual artist, and a martial artist (black belter).

Having been trained in aviation medicine too, Esguerra, a native of Bansalan, Davao del Sur, has the rank of a flight surgeon in the Philippine Coast Guard. "My rank is like that of a surgeon-general in the military," he said.

Just the other day, he had to attend to a Filipino sailor, plucked out from the South China Sea by the Coast Guard, who had three crushed fingers which were almost detached from his right hand, as a result of an accident.

Esguerra performed emergency service, applied splinters and stemmed the flow of blood. Then the seaman was rushed to the nearby Manila Medical Center. "I hope he will be able to use his right hand again," said the doctor.

Esguerra is with the Coast Guard's Air Group, which has two helicopters, two fixed-wing and 456-meter rescue ships, a helipad and treatment bay. "That's why I have a nice 'playground' here," he quipped.

DR. ESGUERRA attends to a patient on Mt. Everest. During the expedition last May, he was able to save the lives of two trekkers, an Indonesian woman and a Nepali.

Even for a veteran trekker like "Doc Ted," as he is known at the Coast Guard HQ, the Mt. Everest experience was a memorable one. He stayed for the most part at the base camp, which is 18,000 feet above sea level. There, he was able to save the lives of two trekkers, Amalia Yunita of Indonesia and Babu Ramu, a Nepali official, who were both at death's door.

The Indonesian woman was suffering from cerebral edema, meaning her brains were filled with water. "This was an ICU (intensive care unit) case," recalled Esguerra, "but she could not be brought down because she would die of the extreme cold."

The Italians had a "secret" laboratory known as the Pyramid, but they allowed the Filipino physician to use their equipment. The next day, his patient recovered fully from her ailment.

She later wrote Esguerra a letter saying that in gratitude for saving her life, she was now involved in rescue missions. Yunita had, in effect, "paid it forward," to paraphrase the title of that popular American movie.

The other patient, Ramu, was suffering from pulmonary and cerebral edema but was in an even worse condition, his face pale and turning black. Using a high-pressure bag, Esguerra pumped air into the patient and gave him an injection to decompress the edema.

The patient began to deteriorate, as a phalanx of Nepali officials watched. In fact, he almost died at 4 a.m. the following day but he managed to pull through, thanks to Esguerra.

Everyone was impressed, including the Sherpa guides, and word spread that in the base camp, there was a Filipino doctor who was good at his task, who even educated his patients and who, more importantly, did not charge anything for his services, unlike the other foreign doctors who asked for exorbitant fees!

Soon patients were making a beeline for Esguerra's camp and paying him in kind with camping and trekking gear he brought back home.

Another Everest experience was less edifying; in fact, it was traumatic. Before the horrified eyes of Esguerra and other personnel, Tibetans fleeing their communist-controlled country were shot allegedly by border guards.

Their bodies were shoved into crevices and the bloodstains covered with snow. Sixteen Tibetans were reported killed in that incident.

Esguerra was in a rage the entire day, unable to comprehend the senselessness and the injustice of it all.

This concern for social justice and a kinship with the oppressed, may be found in Esguerra's poems, songs, and paintings. Add to these themes his concern for children (he has one child) and his commitment to the environment. He is the vocalist and chief songwriter for his group called Tanglaw Sining, which performs in neo-ethnic costumes.

DR. TED Esguerra at base camp on the world's tallest peak. He was a member of the First Philippine Mt. Everest Expedition. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Their songs are in the folk and light rock mediums, and they sing in schools, private soirées, and benefit concerts in Metro Manila and in the regions. In the process, Esguerra has collected a lot of native stringed instruments, mouth harps, gongs and percussion instruments from the Philippines and other countries, like India, Nepal and even Uganda in Africa, like the *kubing, hegalong, bungkaka, saranggi, dothar, engoma*, among others.

In the film "José Rizal," directed by Marilou Diaz Abaya, there was one scene that moved Esguerra to tears: That of the hero (played by Cesar Montano) saying goodbye to his dead infant son. This inspired Esguerra to write a poem in Filipino which he set to music.

The doctor played this song on the guitar for this writer. It is a gentle, tender melody. We can almost hear the voice of Rizal addressing his son, and saying that he is sure that his baby is now in a better world.

The songwriter's many poems and lyrics are written down in longhand in a large notebook, or kept in his computer files.

An intellectual and also a health-conscious athlete, Esguerra feels that there are five fields that man should explore, experiment with, and ultimately master, in any order: Science, the arts, faith, sports and philosophy.

"All art is interwoven," he said, as if to explain his more than ordinary talents. "That is why I can sing, write, and paint."

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This section is dedicated to Filipinos overseas toiling on land and at sea, in factories, in construction sites and in the homes of the world, and wherever work can be contracted to secure a better life for their stories.

The go-to guy in Greece

By Tessa R. Salazar

ATHENS—FORMER seaman Fernando Brucelo, 50, tried to squeeze his face out of the prison window to get a glimpse the sky. But the window was too small. His head throbbing in pain, he cried inside his Greek prison cell.

He thought he would go insane as he agonized over his two sons who would not be able to finish grade school, and his wife whom he suspected of squandering their life savings on things other than their sons' education.

Before setting foot in Greece in 1997, Fernando was at sea for 10 years. After hearing news of ships sinking, he became worried for his own "untimely demise" in an accident at sea. He decided to jump ship in Athens, and shortly after, he worked in a multimillion-euro yacht. A few months later, he was caught without legal documents and sent to jail.

In the pit of desperation, Fernando heard about a Filipino named Kuya Joe, who seemed to make things happen for compatriots. He called him from prison. Joe Valencia, whom Fernando barely knew, rushed to the immigration office in Athens.

Valencia, who headed the Filipino migrant workers' organization Kasapi-Hellas, mobilized Greek volunteer lawyers. These lawyers, who have known Kasapi for quite some time, turned the wheels of justice in Fernando's favor—all free of charge.

Fernando was granted his legal documents, became self-employed, acquired his own social security policy, and got his old yacht maintenance job back.

Merceditas Canillas, 66, who has been working in Greece for 25 years, recounted how she was forced to quit her job in 1998 in the household of a Greek-American millionaire because her employer kept opening her personal things.

Canillas' employer, however, countered with a complaint accusing her of stealing. Valencia and a Kasapi volunteer lawyer came to her rescue. During the court hearings, it was revealed that her employer just didn't want Canillas to leave her.

Some migrant workers say that though Joe and wife Debbie just have enough to get by, they were able to provide temporary shelter and other financial support when it was needed most.

Valencia was also the go-to guy for those who found themselves in a tight fix. One time, a Filipino woman gave birth in a hospital but didn't have any money to pay the bill. Valencia tried to raise funds but still came up short. After pleading with the hospital, he was able to whisk the mother and child home. There was also the time in Athens when a 25-year-old domestic helper—a former high school teacher—asked for Valencia's help because she said she was being maltreated and her passport was being held by her employer.

Support whenever

It is these kinds of legal entanglements that Valencia is said to make his presence most felt—when Filipinos are being short-changed in their salaries; when passports are being held by employers without valid reasons; or when Filipino women are sexually harassed and maltreated.

Yvette Sanchez, 38, who has been working for 16 years in Greece and is a full-time reporter for Balita newspaper, dared even to say that Valencia and his Kasapi-Hellas have been able to help Filipino workers more than the Philippine Embassy has.

"Kuya Joe even assists Filipinos who die in Greece. He helps send their remains back home to the Philippines," Sanchez said.

"Filipino workers who fall sick and are confined in hospitals but do not have the money to pay the bills because the employer did not give any financial assistance; Kuya Joe finds a way for these people," said Canillas, who is also the president of Filipino women's organization Diwata.

Canillas added that membership fees collected from the 1,300 Kasapi members are used to help Filipinos in need, whether they may be Kasapi members or not. Kasapi-Hellas, an organization of Filipino migrant workers registered under the Greek government, also conducts occasional fund-raising activities for cause-oriented projects.

Popular in Europe

Nestor Villanueva, 46, who has been employed in Greece for 16 years as a driver, gardener and painter, said that Valencia is popular not only in Greece but in the whole of Europe because of his zeal in fighting for migrant rights.

"Many Filipinos here run to Kuya Joe first before going to the Philippine Embassy. This is nothing against the embassy. It just happened this way," said Villanueva.

Valencia himself was reluctant at first to be interviewed by the INQUIRER but later obliged under the condition that the issues he has been raising for 16 years be discussed. Low-key and soft-spoken, Kuya Joe has an office at Balita, where he's also an editor.

Balita is published by the International Media Network, which subsidizes the paper in support of Filipino migrants. It also subsidizes six other newspapers from Romania, Bulgaria, Russia, Albania and Poland. Balita accounts for the smallest circulation (at 4,000 copies a week) versus the Albanian newspaper (128,000 copies a week). Valencia estimates there are almost a million Albanians in Greece.

Who is 'Kuya Joe?'

Following Valencia around in a typical hectic day, one would guess Filipinos in Greece would number just as many. But in reality, Greece hosts just about 50,000 to 70,000 Filipino migrant workers, 70 percent of whom are employed as house assistants to upper-class Athenians. Philippine Ambassador to Greece Rigoberto Tiglao said in an e-mail that underestimated would be the number of Filipino seamen and small entrepreneurs.

Filipinos describe Greeks as "feisty," and in a way, Valencia has acquired this trait, and has channeled this to help fellow Filipinos.

At 64, Valencia could be seen shuttling from one radio show to the next, or driving back to Kasapi-Hellas headquarters.

He runs two radio programs, one of which is Radio Kaibigan or Radio Filias in Greece. It is broadcast in the main state AM radio, reaching the islands of Greece, and is the premier public communication medium of the Greek state.

Radio Kaibigan's air time—granted by a Greek broadcasting company for free in recognition and support of Filipinos and Kasapi—airs one hour a week. Radio Kaibigan celebrated its fourth anniversary on November. The other program, "Athens International Radio: 30-Minute Bulletin," is broadcast in Taglish over the municipal FM radio band of Athens.

Protection from sharks

Valencia's wife Debbie, on the other hand, founded Munting Nayon, a multicultural school in Greece.

In a phone interview with the INQUIRER, Mother Mary John Mananzan, prioress of St. Scholastica's College in Manila, confirmed that she had visited Joe and Debbie in Athens several years ago and sent an administrator to guide the Munting Nayon curricula for three years.

The 8-year-old Filipino women's organization in Greece—Diwata—is a spin-off of Kasapi founded by Debbie and Canillas, among other Filipino women.

Canillas, who also does volunteer work during her free time feeding refugees from China, Africa and Nigeria, among others, said Diwata is not only a cooperative but a group that pushes for women's rights and freedom from the repressive "5-6" loan system. Canillas said that as much as 30,000 women can acquire loans from Diwata.

Valencia described Diwata as the only organization of women that has vibrant loans and savings cooperative helping free women from being victimized by loan sharks, or by fellow Filipinos who lend money with a 20-percent interest.

Valencia stressed that for over 16 years, his group has been lobbying for the legalization of unrecorded migrants in Greece and a bilateral social security agreement between the Philippine government and the Greek state, among other issues. His passion for these issues has earned him detractors who accused him of being a former priest who turned into a National Democratic Front member.

He said that his life in Greece was an open book. Since he was not a government official who should undergo public scrutiny, what detractors should focus on instead, he said, were issues hounding OFWs that included human smuggling, loan sharks, undocumented jobless youth, unwanted pregnancies and teenage mothers, and shabu trafficking.

Valencia said that the big number of undocumented migrants in Greece could be traced to the illegal recruiters with fake contracts under Law 89 (passed in 1967 to attract foreign investors to set up off-shore companies). Under Law 89, these companies were able to bring non-Greeks to work in their offices.

"But there are always people who are out to make easy and fast money. So from the legitimate off-shore companies, some 'enterprising' individuals created illegitimate off-shore companies solely for the purpose of recruiting people. Thus, hundreds of Pinoys entered Greece this way, with Filipino recruiters as their agents. And you know how much they charge each person to pay to get in to Greece? 7,000-8,000 euros!" Kuya Joe exclaimed.

Embassy alerts

In an e-mail to the INQUIRER, Tiglao said that the embassy, especially its labor arm, the Philippine Overseas Labor Office, "has been quite aggressive in clamping down—to the extent of its authority—on such Filipino recruiters here in Athens."

Tiglao said they have all the records on the alerts they raised against such swindlers. He related how only two months ago, they raised the alarm against a lady who had victimized several Filipinos.

"Do not be fooled by these swindlers who portray Greece (and Cyprus) as an ideal jumping board to Europe. Because of the influx of illegal workers from other countries, Greece has been tightening its laws and regulations on immigration and foreign workers. Before going to Greece, see first your labor contract and your working permit. Don't be afraid to ask the POEA about your plan to work in Greece," he added.

The second issue Valencia cited was the lack of bilateral social security/labor agreement between Greece and the Philippines.

"There are OFWs who have been here since the late '70s. Their social security payments will all go to the Greek state if they decide to go back to the Philippines unless they meet retirement requirements.

Social security issue

"How many Filipino ambassadors have (come and gone) and have done nothing about the social security issue? This is the (migrants') money (at stake)."

"We have to do something about it. They think that being assigned to Greece is just like having a nice time, while the Filipino migrant has to scrub the toilets," Kuya Joe said.

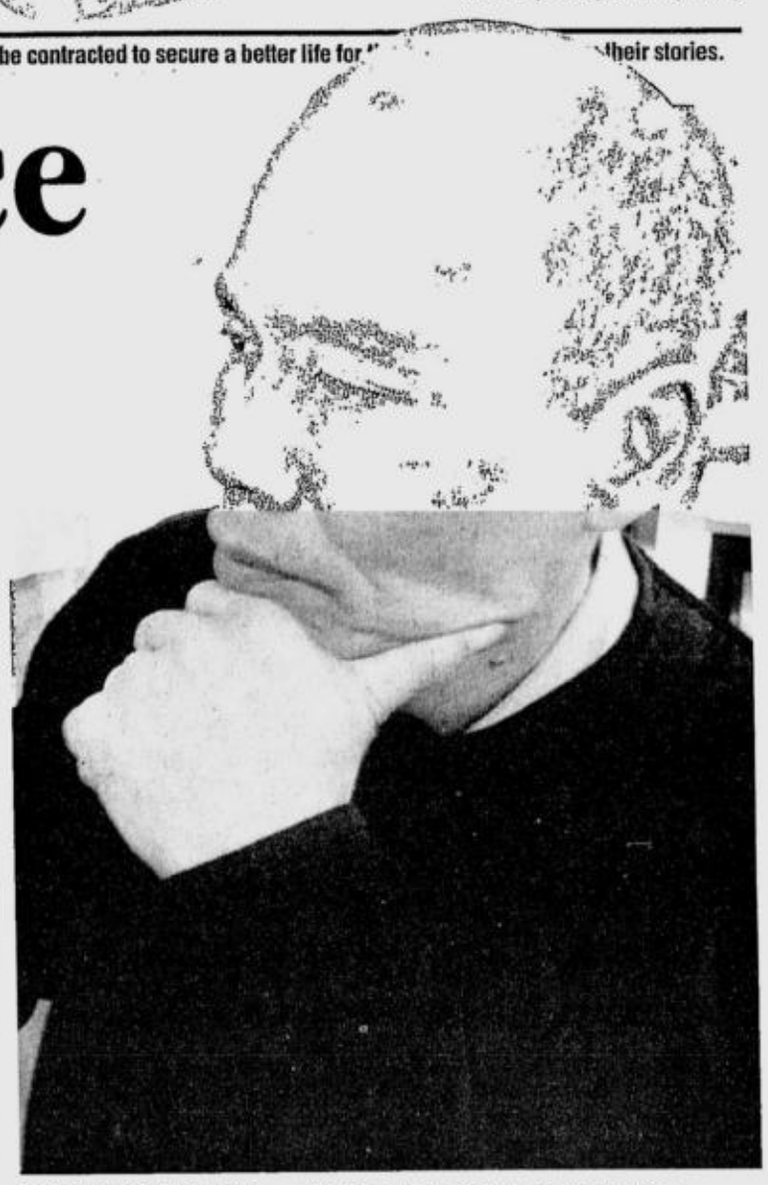
Valencia can't help but recall the embassy's "shabby treatment" of OFWs. "Try to report a case to the Philippine Embassy and they will answer, '*Problema na naman.*' They consider Filipinos a problem."

"It's in the law—Batasang Pambansa 8042—that said the embassy must give priority to Filipino migrants," said Valencia.

Republic Act No. 8042 was enacted in June 1995 to concretize government's commitment to protect the rights and promote the welfare of migrant workers, their families and other overseas Filipinos in distress. It also provides the framework for concerted government action in dealing with the difficulties faced by Filipinos abroad.

In a nation that considers democracy and workers' rights as sacred, Valencia continues to wait for Philippine Embassy officials to wake up and use Greek society's prolabor stance in the Filipino laborer's favor.

For Valencia, it's a restless wait. The queue to his open door is getting longer.



JOE VALENCIA in Athens: Filipinos here approach us, not the Philippine Embassy, for help. TESSA SALAZAR

IN THE SERVICE of Filipinos in trouble: Joe and friends Fernando Brucelo, Merceditas Canillas, and Yvette Sanchez at the Balita office in Greece. TESSA SALAZAR

'Joe doesn't know anything about bilateral agreements'

By Tessa R. Salazar

PHILIPPINE AMBASSADOR TO Greece Rigoberto Tiglao retorted his predecessors have been very well aware of the problems besetting migrant OFWs, and that the Philippine Embassy has been exerting all efforts to convince the Greek government to start negotiations.

Tiglao added that the Greek government had agreed to start technical talks on the social security/labor agreement issue with the Philippine government represented by the SSS in December. Recently, however, the Greek government requested a postponement to the first quarter of 2007. "We are doing all we can in terms of networking with Greece to have these talks on the way."

Tiglao explained that a bilateral social security agreement with the Greek government is a formidable project. The last such agreement signed between Greece and another country was in the 1960s.

Tiglao said that even countries whose citizens comprise the biggest migrant workers in Greece (Albania, for instance, has more than 500,000 migrant workers in Greece) are all working for such social security agreements with Greece. He cited that even countries like Australia are still working for such labor agreements with Greece.

He added that such agreements would mostly mean a net inflow of funds into Greece, as there are over one million Greek immigrants to Australia (mostly in the 1960s) who now want their social security pensions be transferable to Greece.

"The problem with Valencia is that he doesn't know the intricacies, the difficulties of bilateral agreements," Tiglao said.

Tiglao said there have been cases in which Kasapi members turned to the embassy for help because Valencia couldn't help them.

Tiglao said criticisms against the embassy are made out of sheer ignorance. He described the voluminous paper work validating passports, special power of attorneys, weddings and birth certificates. He added that more than this, embassy staff are doing work almost to the point of being counselors to Filipinos in Greece, attending to them when they are in personal or legal crisis.

Opthalmologist Dr. Marcos Fojas, who introduced himself as the first Filipino to come to Athens and who was also awarded the Philippine Presidential Banaag Award in December 2002 by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, defended the embassy.

"The Philippine Embassy is a very busy embassy and it is undermanned."

He added that it does not only take care of thousands of Filipinos in Greece but also thousands of Filipinos in Cyprus.

"Like any government office, there will be complaints from some Filipino residents as its employees have their hands full of diplomatic and extradiplomatic duties."

Fojas added that this writer has "talked to the wrong people and did not consult other more responsible and objective Filipinos." He noted that this writer has been "waylaid by (Valencia's) sweet tongue."

Fojas revealed that Valencia refused to accept the offer of then Ambassador Norberto Basilio for a Philippine passport, as this would have made Valencia "lose his asylum status with all its fringe benefits from the Greek government."

"It is true Basilio offered me a Philippine passport, saying 'no questions asked' but the offer, to be frank, was too good to be true. My lawyer told me it could be a bait, because giving passports to political refugees entails a process which involves DFA Manila. Besides, there is a saying in Greek, '*timeo danaos dona ferentes.*' I am afraid of Greeks even if they are bearing gifts," said Joe.

TIGLAO: We are working on this formidable project.

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Bush shuffles leadership team in Iraq

WASHINGTON—PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH is embarking on a sweeping overhaul of the US diplomatic and military leadership in Iraq as he puts the finishing touches on a retooled war-fighting strategy.

Bush, expected to unveil his new plan for Iraq in a speech as early as Wednesday, also filled a critical diplomatic vacancy in Washington and named a new US spy chief.

The reshuffle—begun when Bush dumped defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld late last year—came Friday as Democrats who now control the US Congress warned against sending more US troops to Iraq and demanded an end to the war.

The Republican president moved to replace the head of the US Central Command that oversees the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as the commander of the US-led forces in Iraq and pushed ahead with plans to make the US ambassador there, Zalmay Khalilzad, the new US envoy to the United Nations.

Replacing Khalilzad in Baghdad, officials said, would be Ryan Crocker, 57, the US ambassador in Pakistan since November 2004. Crocker is one of the State Department's most experienced Middle East experts and a fluent Arabic speaker.

Admiral William Fallon, 62, currently head of US forces in the Pacific, would replace retiring General John Abizaid at the Central Command, which manages the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Fallon was a navy combat pilot during the Vietnam War, commanded an attack squadron during the first Gulf War in 1991 and was involved in Nato's Operation Deliberate Force in Bosnia.

In Iraq, Lieutenant General David Petraeus, 54, would replace General George Casey as the man in charge of all US and coalition forces, according to White House-endorsed recommendations from Defense Secretary Robert Gates.

"The president has accepted these recommendations and will be forwarding the nominations. And he's pleased to do so," said Snow.

The White House dismissed suggestions that Bush was unhappy with the performance of the generals, and pointed out that Casey, 58, would be promoted to Army chief of staff.

"General Petraeus is a soldier of vision and determination," Bush said in a statement. "His service in Iraq has equipped him with expertise in irregular warfare and stability operations and an understanding of the enemy we face." *AFP*

FALLON AP

US Marines killed Iraqis one by one in Haditha

WASHINGTON—AN INVESTIGATIVE REport compiled by the US military indicates that US Marines gunned down five unarmed Iraqis who stumbled onto the scene of a 2005 roadside bombing in Haditha, Iraq, The Washington Post reported Saturday.

Citing the document obtained by the newspaper, the account said that Staff Sergeant Frank Wuterich, the squad's leader, shot the men one by one after Marines ordered them out of a white taxi in the moments following the explosion, which killed one Marine and injured two others.

Another Marine fired rounds into their bodies as they lay on the ground, the paper said, citing the military report.

"The taxi's five occupants exited the vehicle and according to US and Iraqi witnesses, were shot by Wuterich as they stood, unarmed, next to the vehicle approximately ten feet in front of him," The Post quotes the report by the Naval Criminal Investigative Service as saying.

One of the witnesses, Sergeant Asad Amer Mashoot, a 26-year-old Iraqi soldier who was in the Marine convoy, told investigators he watched in horror as the four students and the taxi driver fell.

"They didn't even try to run away," he said.

The shootings were the first in a series of violent reactions by Marines on Nov. 19, 2005 that left 24 Iraqi civilians dead, the paper said.

The report, which relied on hundreds of interviews with Marines, Iraqi soldiers and civilian survivors conducted months after the incident, provides evidence that the Marines responded to the roadside bombing in ways that are difficult to reconcile with their rules of engagement. *AFP*

GIVE LOVE ON NEW YEAR'S DAY
Ana Julia Torres kisses Jupiter, an African lion she rescued malnourished from a circus six years ago, at her animal shelter in Cali, Colombia, Jan. 5. Ana Julia Torres is the owner of the 12-year-old shelter that rescues sick and mistreated animals from all over Colombia. AP

Diplomats call for peace force in Somalia

MOGADISHU—WESTERN AND African diplomats called on Friday for the urgent deployment of peacekeepers in Somalia as al-Qaida's deputy leader urged defeated Islamists to launch an Iraq-style insurgency against Ethiopian forces there.

The Islamists took control of much of southern Somalia in June but have now been forced into hiding after being routed from their strongholds by Ethiopian military defending Somalia's interim government in two weeks of full-scale warfare.

They have vowed to fight on, melting into the hills in Somalia's remote southern tip where Ethiopian and government forces are hunting hundreds of their fighters.

Nairobi has sent troops to seal its frontier, blocking entry to Somali refugees fleeing the conflict. Many fear the Islamists, who fled a last stronghold on New Year's Day, will mount a holy war against largely Christian Ethiopia.

"You must ambush, mine, raid and (carry out) martyrdom campaigns so that you can wipe them out," Ayman al-Zawahri, deputy to al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden, said in his message.

"As happened in Iraq and Afghanistan, when the world's strongest power was defeated by the campaigns of the *mujahideen*, troops going to heaven, so its slaves shall be defeated on the Muslim lands of Somalia," he said.

In Nairobi, the International Contact Group on Somalia, which includes the United States, European and African nations, pushed for a fast deployment of foreign peacekeepers approved by the United Nations before the war.

US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer said the security vacuum had to be filled, but played down the significance of the al-Qaida tape.

"I think a lot of bold statements were made by extremists in the Courts, that they were going to kill Somalis, that they were going to stand and fight ... and they just ran," she said.

A general seen as a contender to lead the Pentagon's Africa operations said he did not expect US troops to go to Somalia.

"Situations change but I do not see it now, and there's nothing that I've heard that implies that at all," said General William Ward, deputy commander of US European Command and a former brigade commander in Somalia.

The United States said however that it would give $24 million to Somalia, both for development and to support the peacekeeping force, in addition to $16 million announced earlier in the week. *Reuters*

Polish bishop admits ties to communist secret police

PARIS—WARSAW'S NEW Catholic archbishop, Stanislaw W. Wielgus, caught in Eastern Europe's widening witch hunt for former communist secret police informers, admitted Friday that he had collaborated with the Sluzba Bezpieczenstwa, or Security Service, known as the SB.

"Before you today, I confess to the mistake committed by me years ago, just as I have confessed to the Holy Father," Wielgus said in an open letter to Polish Catholics. "By the fact of this entanglement, I have damaged the church."

He said he compounded that damage by denying "facts of this cooperation" in recent days.

Wielgus insisted, however, that he had neither spied on anyone nor harmed anyone with his activities. He said the only thing he ever did was to inform the secret police of his agenda during foreign academic meetings and to promise not to take part in anticommunist activities.

He said it was up to Pope Benedict XVI to decide whether he would keep his new job.

The bishop is to be officially elevated to archbishop during a ceremony on Sunday in Warsaw at St. John's Cathedral, though many voices in Poland have called for him to step down.

Confirmation that the archbishop collaborated is particularly troubling because the Polish secret police murdered a charismatic anticommunist priest from the archdiocese, the Rev. Jerzy Popieluszko, in 1984. Warsaw's departing archbishop, Cardinal Jozef Glemp, waged a quiet battle with the Communist Party in those years.

The uproar over Wielgus' past began shortly after Pope Benedict picked him in early December to succeed Glemp as Warsaw's archbishop. A Polish daily, Gazeta Polska, reported that the bishop, 67, had spied on dissidents and fellow clerics for more than two decades, until communism collapsed in 1989. *NYT*

ANDO AFP

WORLDBRIEFS

Missing Indonesian plane

MAKASSAR, INDONESIA— US transport safety officials arrived in Indonesia's Sulawesi on Saturday to help investigate an airliner that disappeared six days ago in bad weather with 102 people aboard. The pilot of the 17-year-old Boeing 737-400 did not issue a mayday call and there have been no emergency locator signals to help rescuers combing jungles, mountains and seas around Sulawesi to find the plane operated by Indonesian budget carrier, Adam Air. In what officials said was his last conversation with air traffic control in Makassar, the pilot said the flight had encountered crosswinds and needed safe coordinates. Radar continued to track the flight for some time after that. Its last communication was a signal from its emergency locator beacon that a Singapore satellite picked up and relayed to Jakarta. Nothing has been heard since. *Reuters*

Schwarzenegger sworn in

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA—A hobbling Arnold Schwarzenegger was sworn in as California governor here Friday, nailing his colors firmly to the center-ground and calling for a new era of "post-partisan" US politics. Schwarzenegger, who broke his leg in a Christmas skiing accident, appeared on crutches for a glitzy inauguration ceremony at the Memorial Auditorium in Sacramento, California's administrative capital. "I will look to the future, I will look to the center. I will look to the dreams of the people," Schwarzenegger said in a speech that represented a thinly veiled critique of President George W. Bush's administration. The action-hero-turned-Republican-governor bucked a nationwide tilt towards the Democrats in November's elections, securing a landslide victory in California to cap a remarkable political turnaround. Analysts say the 59-year-old "Terminator" star won over voters in the Democrat-dominated state by distancing himself from the Bush administration on issues such as abortion, stem cell research and the environment. *AFP*

Weight standard for models rejected

SINCE THE FALL, THE AMERICAN FASHion industry has been under increasing pressure to respond to a wave of dangerously thin models who have set the aesthetic standards of global fashion.

Now the industry has decided to issue guidelines to designers, aimed at promoting healthier behavior among its highly paid clothes hangers.

The guidelines, which fall short of modeling restrictions announced in recent months by fashion show organizers in Madrid, Spain, and Milan, Italy, were introduced Friday at a meeting of the Council of Fashion Designers of America in Manhattan. But the group's recommendations, which will be sent to designers next week in anticipation of the fall fashion shows that begin in New York on Feb. 2, seem unlikely to satisfy many critics of fashion's embrace of ultra-thinness.

According to participants at the meeting, the recommendations are likely to include scheduling fashion-show fittings with younger models during daylight hours, rather than late at night, to help them get more sleep; urging designers to identify models with eating disorders; and introducing more nutritious backstage catering, where a diet of champagne and cigarettes is the norm.

There are no plans to require models to achieve an objective measure of health like a height-to-weight ratio, which was imposed by Madrid in September, a move that brought much public attention to the issue. It was further highlighted by the death of Ana Carolina Reston, a 21-year-old Brazilian model, from complications of anorexia in November.

Madrid's ban of models who have a body mass index less than 18, a normal body standard according to the guidelines of the World Health Organization, did not initially draw much support among the organizers of shows in the major fashion capitals, until last month, when the Italian group issued what it described as a manifesto. *NYT*

2 NYC men save toddler from 4-story fall

KATRINA Cosme holds her 3-year-old son, Timothy Addo in December '06 photo. AP

NEW YORK—TWO PASSERS-BY REScued a 3-year-old boy who fell four stories, scrambling to catch him as he tumbled from a fire escape, police said.

Julio Gonzalez, 43, and Pedro Nevarez, 40, saw 3-year-old Timothy Addo dangling from a Bronx building on Thursday, police said. The boy had crawled out of a window when his baby sitter briefly took her eyes off of him, police said.

"He was hanging on for dear life," Gonzalez said.

Hearing people in the building scream for help as the boy's grip weakened, the men rushed over to position themselves under the fire escape to catch him.

"No one came," Nevarez said. "We knew it was up to us."

The boy tumbled and hit Nevarez in the chest so hard he knocked him off balance, but he bounced into Gonzalez' arms.

Timothy was treated at the hospital for a cut on his forehead.

"He's fine. He's happy. He's smiling," said his mother, 26-year-old Katrina Cosme, who was working at the time of the accident.

Police talked to the baby sitter, and an investigation was continuing Friday, Detective John Sweeney said.

The crucial catch came two days after a bystander threw himself onto a Manhattan subway track to save a man who had fallen, and a day after three police officers delivered a baby on a Brooklyn subway platform.

"This is the week of heroes in New York," Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly said. *AP*

Japan's 'Cup Noodle' king dies aged 96

TOKYO—THE JAPANESE INVENtor of instant noodles, a snack that has sold billions of servings worldwide since its launch, died on Friday at the age of 96, according to an official at Nissin Food Products Co., the company he founded.

Born in Taiwan in 1910 while it was under Japanese occupation; Momofuku Ando ran clothing and other companies in Taipei and Osaka early in his career.

He was inspired to develop the world's first instant noodle product after coming across a long line of people waiting to buy fresh "ramen" noodles from a black market stall during the food shortages after World War Two, Japanese media said.

After his Chicken Ramen product became hugely popular in 1958, despite a luxury price-tag of 35 yen, he went on to bring out the Cup Noodle in 1971.

Providing the instant noodles in a waterproof styrofoam container that could be used to cook them using just hot water proved a stroke of marketing genius that made the product a hit with time-pressed people around the world.

Ando remained in the public eye until recently—appearing on television in 2005 to promote a version of the Cup Noodle adapted for astronauts to eat aboard the space shuttle Discovery. *Reuters*

Bagong Pinoy SIM - Pamaskong Handog ng Globe sa Hong Kong!

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Excited na pinakilala ni Cesar Montano ang bagong Pinoy SIM na loaded with Share-a-Load at GCash

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Nagiliboard lang ang mga CSL Representatives upang palawagin ang mga features ng KUMUSTA KA KABABAYAN SIM

Naging mas engrande ang selebrasyon ng International Migrants Day na ginanap sa Chater Road, Central Hong Kong noong nakaraang December 17 dahil sa Pamaskong Handog ng Globe Telecom, GCash, at CSL. Sinorpresa ng Globe Telecom at CSL ang libu-libo nating mga kababayan sa Hong Kong sa pag-launch ng ***KUMUSTA KA KABABAYAN SIM***, ang pinaka-loaded na prepaid SIM para sa mga Pinoy workers sa Hong Kong.

Dinala rin ng Globe Telecom at GCash mula sa Pilipinas ang mga naglalakihang Pinoy celebrities para mabigyang saya ang ating mga kababayan. At tulad ng inaasahan, enjoy na enjoy ang mga manonood sa pagdating nina Cesar Montano, Francis Magalona, Kitchie Nadal, True Faith at Pretty Trisha.

Nagiliboard lang ang mga CSL Representatives upang palawagin ang mga features ng KUMUSTA KA KABABAYAN SIM

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Sa pag-launch ng pinakabagong prepaid SIM ng Globe Telecom at CSL, lalong mas maraming Pinoy workers ang mapapalapit sa kanilang mga mahal sa buhay dahil sa mas mababang IDD rates sa pagtawag sa Globe o Touch Mobile (TM) subscribers na nasa Pilipinas. Sa ***KUMUSTA KA KABABAYAN SIM***, for as low as HK$0.70 per minute (Sat-Sun) matatawagan na ng ating mga kababayan ang minamahal nila sa Pinas. Mas mura ang halaga ng tawag by 25% kahit kasama pa ang local connection charges. At hindi lang 'yan, HK$0.50 per text message lang kung magpapadala ng text sa lahat ng Globe at TM subscribers tuwing Linggo.

Cesar Montano at Kitchie Nadal ay iba lamang sa mga hot celebrities na nagdulot ng saya sa Chater Road, Hong Kong

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Para sa karagdagang impormasyon tungkol sa ***KUMUSTA KA KABABAYAN SIM*** at iba pang Globe Kababayan services, bumisita lang sa Globe Kababayan website: *www.globekababayan.com.ph*.

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CSL Create a Simple Life

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Malugod na nagperform ng song numbers sina Medwin Marfil, kasama ang bandang True Faith at comedienne na si Pretty Trisha

Masayang tinanggap ni Elizabeth Berbon (katabi ni Francis Magalona), ang grand prize winner ng Duty Free Philippines' kitchen showcase ang certificate niya mula kay Jenny Start at Lui Ferrer

Nagdagsaan ang ating mga Kababayan sa Chater Road, Central Hong Kong upang makibahagi sa selebrasyon

WHAT'S INSIDE

Nowitzki, Mavs log 13th straight victory /A25

Sunday SPORTS

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Text us your feedback: inquirer sprt name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

BAP board fires Jinggoy

IT'S ONE STEP BACKward as far as the unification of Philippine basketball is concerned.

The Basketball Association of the Philippines (BAP) discarded Sen. Jinggoy Estrada as its president yesterday, citing Estrada's decision to forge a unification plan with the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas (SBP) without consulting its board.

The decision came just a couple of days before Estrada and PLDT chief Manny V. Pangilinan were to announce in a press conference the formation of a unified basketball organization that the world basketball federation (Fiba) required the country to form as a requisite for lifting its suspension.

The development whipped up a storm of angry reactions, with major basketball stakeholders calling BAP officials "misguided" and blasting the organization for "upholding a tradition of corruptness [and] a tradition of clinging to power and bringing shame to the country."

"We regret to find out that [Estrada] acted on his own and forged [an] agreement with Mr. Pangilinan without consulting the BAP Executive Board," the board said in a press release sent to media offices after reaching the decision to remove Jinggoy during an emergency executive meeting yesterday.

It was the same board that installed Estrada as president when former senator Joey Lina resigned.

Under the agreement forged in Hong Kong recently, Estrada would serve as SBP chair and Pangilinan as president.

The BAP added that it had already informed Estrada of its decision. The son of former president Joseph Estrada, who replaced Lina last November, was said to have accepted the decision "out of respect to the wishes of the majority."

ESTRADA

PANGILINAN

Pangilinan, who learned of the BAP move yesterday, deferred comment until tomorrow's press conference.

Bacolod Rep. Monico Puentevella, however, believes Estrada still stands as BAP president until the group's general assembly ratifies the board action, making it possible for the senator to represent the BAP in tomorrow's press conference with Pangilinan.

For the sport's major stakeholders in the country who were hoping to finally send a national team in major international meets this year, acceptance did not come easy.

"The time for diplomacy is over," said commissioner Noli Eala of the PBA, which reformatted its calendar and sent millions of pesos in profits down the drain just to be able to free its players for national team duties.

"The decision of the misguided elements of the BAP is a big slap to the face of Philippine basketball and to efforts of unification," added Eala, who said he will continue to search for ways to unify basketball in the country.

"This is an insult that will benefit Sen. Jinggoy Estrada in the end," Puentevella, an administration congressman, told the INQUIRER. "He showed that he was ready to put aside his personal interests for the sake of the sport."

PBL commissioner Chino Trinidad, another vocal proponent of unification efforts, went a step further and called on the Fiba to step into the row.

"It's high time for Fiba to realize that the only entity that doesn't want the process to prosper is the BAP," said Trinidad. "That's how bad the system of the BAP is. It only shows, without question, why the BAP should go. It's upholding a tradition of corruptness, a tradition of clinging to power and bringing shame to the country."

The BAP defended its decision, saying "The BAP, as an institution in local sports, has the right to protect itself from outside forces with vested interests and who are only out to destroy it."

Trinidad laughed off the explanation.

"What outside forces are they talking about?" said Trinidad. "Jinggoy is part of them. If those people who want the country back in the international scene are the ones they refer to as having vested interests, then so be it."

The Philippine Olympic Committee (POC), which expelled the BAP from its roster of national sports associations, refused to comment yet on the development.

"[POC president Jose] Peping Cojuangco just wants to see first how this plays out before the POC will give its comment," said Joey Romasanta, the Olympic body's spokesman. "The POC will just be onlookers at this point."

Last Dec. 24, Estrada and Pangilinan announced that they have already come to terms regarding the formation of the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas (SBP) that will serve as the country's governing body in basketball.

But BAP spokesman Fritz Gaston said his group will not join the merger if the name of the BAP will not be retained.

Earlier, former two-time Fiba head Lito Puyat urged the POC to immediately reinstate the BAP and blasted "individuals with vested interests for trying to destroy a 70-year-old institution."

With reports from Musong R. Castillo, Jasmine W. Payo, Marc Anthony Reyes, Beth Celis

Pichay looks into chess game-fixing

THE NATIONAL CHESS FEDERATION OF the Philippines is looking into reports of game-fixing in the sport.

PICHAY

At least five players will be investigated due to alleged game-fixing in the past year said NCPF president Rep. Prospero "Butch" Pichay Jr. yesterday

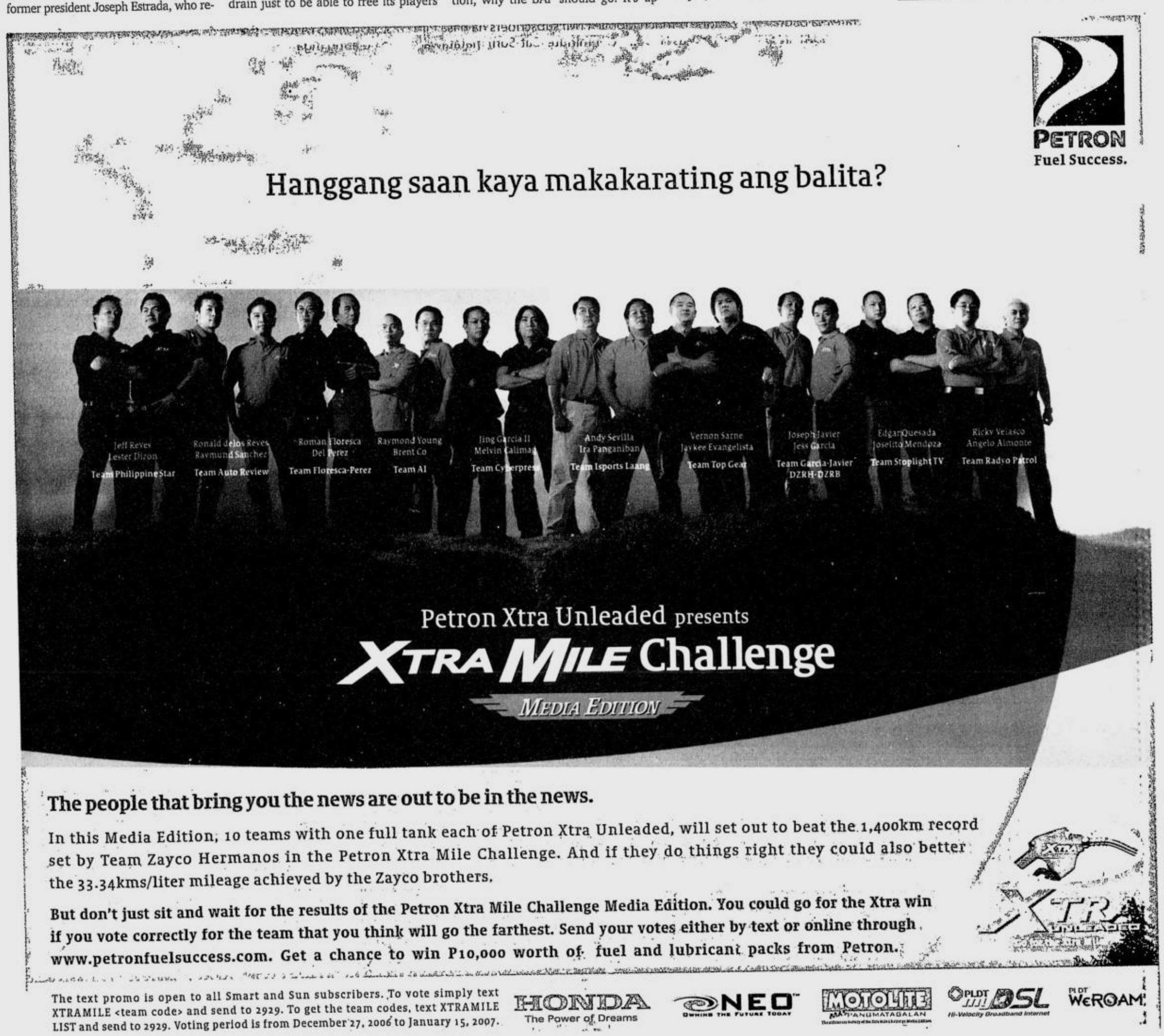
"We have started to investigate these five players," said Pichay, saying the game-fixing was allegedly committed during the Tanuan Open, the Inter-Provincial in Cagayan de Oro and the National Championships.

"If it's proven that they're guilty, they'll be meted six-month suspensions by the NCFP board," said Pichay. "And if they won't change, the board won't hesitate to impose a lifetime ban."

Pichay added the board would look into early draws in tournaments.

"It doesn't look good for players to agree to a draw with less than 15 moves and 10 minutes of play," said Pichay. "It takes the meaning out of fighting chess. Besides it's a gentleman game."

PICHAY/ A24



Tigers, Express try to stay alive anew

By Musong R. Castillo

GAMES TODAY (*Araneta Coliseum*)
4:05 p.m.—Coca-Cola vs Sta. Lucia
6:30 p.m.—Air21 vs Alaska

COCA-COLA AND AIR21 ARE LIVING life a game at a time.

Fresh off resounding victories Friday night, the scrappy Tigers and the Express clash against separate foes today, seeking to live another day, er, game, in the wildcard phase of the Talk 'N Text Philippine Cup.

"As long as we have games to play, we'll enjoy them," an ecstatic Coca-Cola coach Binky Favis said Friday night after his Tigers rallied hard to nip Alaska, 99-98, in overtime. "As long as we're having fun and we're working hard, we can get lucky."

And it would be time for the Tigers to roll up those sleeves again and pray for luck to side with them as they collide with slumping Sta. Lucia in the 4:05 p.m. game at the Araneta Coliseum before the Express take on the Aces at 6:30 p.m.

Victories by the Realtors and the Aces would complete the quarterfinal cast, with Sta. Lucia joining Red Bull, Talk 'N Text and Purefoods in the next round while shutting the door on the others.

But the way the high-priced Realtors played Friday night has left a lot to be desired, the team coming out flat and literally without heart to trail by as many as 31 points before dropping a 121-99 decision to Air21.

It was a loss that left the door wide open for all the teams in this phase, as victories by the Tigers and the Express would basically eliminate Alaska out of the running and make it a three-way fight heading into the final playdate on Wednesday.

For Coca-Cola and Air21, the road to the quarterfinals depends on both sweeping the wildcard and forging a playoff with the natural No. 1 team, which in all likelihood would be the Realtors.

Sta. Lucia took a 10-8 card into the round, a good two games ahead of the 8-10 of the Aces, whose loss to the Tigers after a Dennis Miranda triple at the buzzer more or less put their chances hanging by a thin thread.

The Realtors are assured of at least a playoff for the overall No. 6 ranking even if they lose their remaining two games. The only thing they must hope for, if ever they are dragged into another do-or-die game, is for their form early in the tournament to resurface.

Coca-Cola has won just a total of six games so far, its only gameplan proving simple enough—the Tigers staying close to their foe before playing smart in the stretch.

The leader for more than half of the elimination round, Sta. Lucia, on the other hand, got very little numbers from its superstar-laden starting unit, which missed Dennis Espino because of a bruised knee.

Still, it was no excuse for losing in such a horrid manner to a team that played without its starting center for the first time since the trade that sent Yancy De Ocampo to Talk 'N Text before the holiday break.

Vargas pursues ambitious project

PBA CHAIRMAN RICKY VARGAS, WHOSE pet and most ambitious project for his term is the construction of the league's own coliseum, is working double time to fulfill this vision.

"More than anything, I'd like to see this project through down to its completion, but if that's not possible, at least I hope to be able to sign the Memorandum of Agreement with the parties in charge of the site that will be chosen for the PBA coliseum," Ricky said.

As of today, the short list is down to three, according to Ricky: Quezon City, Taguig, and Mandaluyong, a recent addition.

The Mandaluyong property is owned by PBA ballclub Sta. Lucia Realty and Development.

IN HUDDLE

Beth Celis

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What makes Ricky very optimistic about the materialization of the venue project is the interest manifested not only by the PBA board, San Miguel Corporation in particular, but also by the banking institutions which are willing to invest as much as 80 percent of the billion-peso undertaking.

"They believe it is a very sound business investment, that is why they are willing to invest that much. If the banks will loan us the 80 percent, the league will only need to put up 20 percent, which is roughly P200 million," said Ricky, who emphasized that all transactions will be done through bidding.

As early as now, the PBA chairman is planning to send architects and engineers abroad to study the most technically advanced structures all over the world.

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During a recent visit to his Metro Pacific office in Makati, PLDT chairman Manny V. Pangilinan showed us several gym designs which he had ordered from Europe and North America.

He said he was particularly impressed with a coliseum in Germany.

No question Ricky is getting all the support he needs from his boss who is just as enthusiastic about the project.

****

The Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas has kept everybody guessing about a big announcement the group is scheduled to make tomorrow, January 8.

Now that the SBP's decimated three-man panel (originally composed of MVP, BAP president Joey Lina and Pilipinas Basketball president Bernie Atienza) has been completed again with the entry of Sen. Jinggoy Estrada who replaced Lina, and Ateneo's JunJun Capistrano who replaced Atienza, the SBP is poised to take the next big step aimed to have the Fiba ban on the Philippines lifted.

So what could the big announcement be? That the POC has given its blessing to the new group? That the National Congress, the highest policy-making body of the corporation is convening soon?

Your guess is as good as mine.

As I'm writing this, I got word that the BAP has just issued an equally stunning pronouncement which you will read somewere in these pages.

Notwithstanding, SBP officials said this development will not detract from the scheduled press conference tomorrow.

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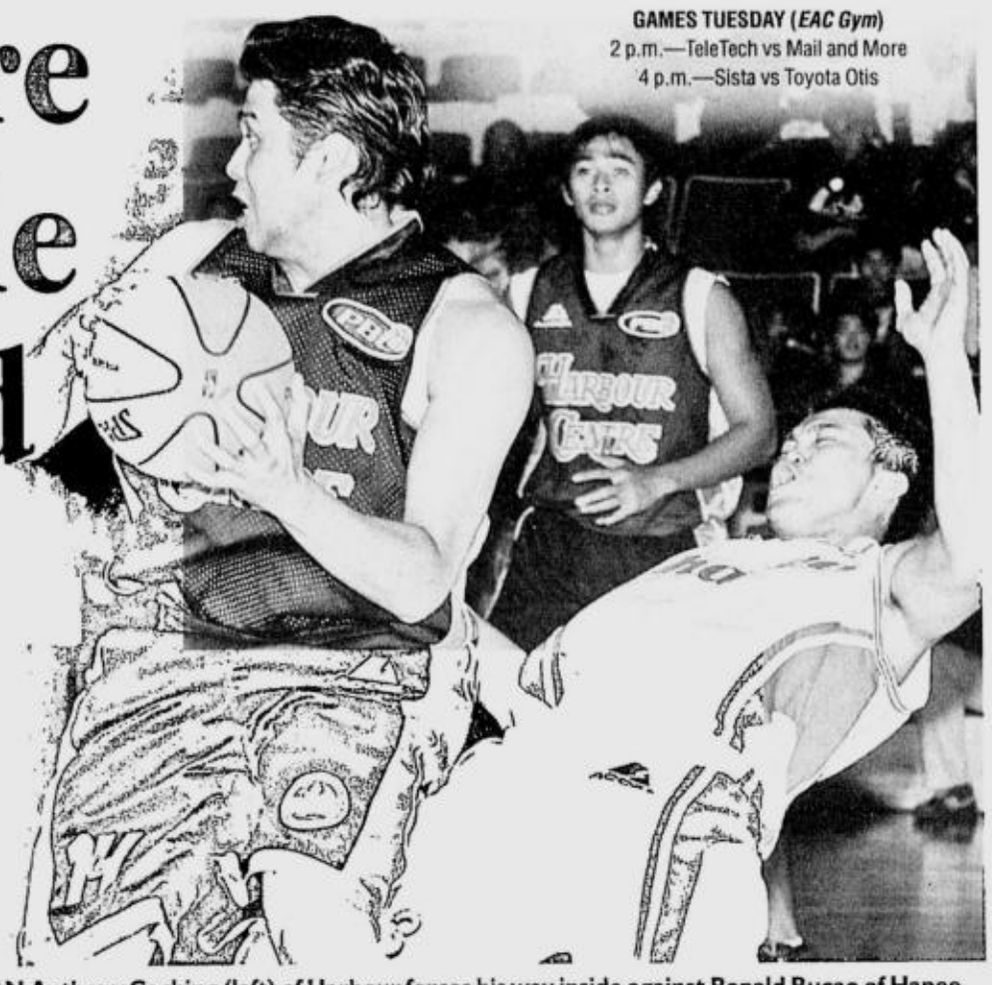
HOOPVINE: Colleague and fellow concert lover Quinito Henson said no way should I miss the Sir Cliff Richard show which is coming to Manila on Feb. 13, a day before Valentine's Day. Now 66, Quinito said the Peter Pan of Pop will unveil a repertoire of his greatest hits and new songs in a one-night -only show at the Araneta Coliseum. It will be Cliff's third appearance here in the country, but only his first in 20 years. According to Quinito, his voice has remained as resplendent as ever. Tickets are now available at Ticketnet outlets, the Araneta Coliseum ticket booth, and SM department stores.

Calling all 1969 graduates of Manuel A. Roxas High School in Canonigo, Paco, Manila. You are invited to a grand alumni homecoming on Jan. 28, 2007, scheduled 1 p.m. onwards. For particulars, please call any of the following: Alma del Rosario Polintan (09189179717), Mercedes Martinez (09186945344), Capt. Manny de Guzman (09208030113) and Marily Palomar Arganda (09209238724).

Mail and More crushes Kettle Korn for lead

By Jasmine W. Payo

GAMES TUESDAY (*EAC Gym*)
2 p.m.—TeleTech vs Mail and More
4 p.m.—Sista vs Toyota Otis



JAN Anthony Coching (left) of Harbour forces his way inside against Ronald Bucao of Hapee during their game yesterday at the Olivarez Gym, Parañaque City. RUDY ESPERAS

MAIL AND MORE, DRAWING HUGE PERFORMANCES FROM ITS starters, cruised to an 84-63 triumph over Kettle Korn-UST to grab a share of the lead in the PBL Silver Cup yesterday at the Olivarez Sports Center.

Forward Jerby del Rosario shot a game-high 17 points on 7-of-9 shooting, combining with Mike Bravo and JR Quinahan as the Comets settled the game early with a 24-6 start.

But coach Lawrence Chongson said Mail and More's fifth straight victory—which pushed the Comets on top with Henkel Sista at 6-2—wasn't as easy as it looked.

"We kept thinking about Kettle Korn during the (holiday) break because teams like them are the ones hard to beat," noted Chongson. "We practiced during vacation, we had a team building. It's good the players responded."

Jonathan Fernandez, JC Intal and Chan Alonzo took control in the final period as Harbour Centre downed Hapee-PCU, 75-67, in the second game.

Intal shot eight of his 10 points in the closing minutes, while Fernandez and Alonzo scored a combined 17 points in the fourth quarter to lead the Port Masters to their third straight victory.

Hapee-PCU, which opened its campaign with five straight wins, skidded to its third straight loss to join Harbour Centre at 5-3.

"We're getting better, we're jelling and we're starting to play team basketball," said Harbour Centre coach Jorge Gallent.

From an 8-0 start, the Comets jumped to a double-digit advantage, 16-6, in only five minutes of play against the Tigers, who shot a poor 26 percent in the first half.

After the break, Allan Evangelista sparked a Tigers comeback from 29-39 with Kettle Korn moving within 39-44 on a triple by Anthony Espiritu with 6:25 left in the third period.

But the threat turned out to be short lived as the Comets answered with a 7-0 tear to make it 51-39.

The lead went up to 23 points, 67-54, behind the efforts of Elmer Espiritu and Nestor David.

Assistant coach Beaujing Acot called the shots for the Tigers as mentor Pido Jarencio served a one-game suspension for an unbecoming conduct versus TeleTech last December.

The Tigers remained winless in eight outings.

The scores:

First Game

MAIL AND MORE 84—Del Rosario 17, Espiritu 13, Bravo 13, David 10, Quinahan 7, Yambao 7, Buenafe 6, Coyukang 4, Pribhdas 3, Te 2, Canizares 2, Ballesteros 0.

KETTLE KORN-UST 63—Espiritu 15, Dizon 10, Urbiztondo 8, Evangelista 7, Ababou 5, Duncil 4, Hubalde 4, Taylor 3, Sierra 3, Santos 2, Cuan 2, Canlas 0, Dela Cruz 0.

Quarters: 24-6, 39-29, 67-46, 84-63

Second Game

HARBOUR CENTRE 75—Gamboa 11, Intal 10, Fernandez 9, Lanete 8, Alonzo 8, Arana 7, Juntilla 6, Coching 5, Vergara 5, Raymundo 4, Ortiguerra 2, Capati 0, Gaco 0.

HAPEE-PCU 67—Castro 21, Rodriguez 14, Larong 7, Bucao 6, Sanz 5, Belga 4, Borboran 4, Butel 2, Hugnatan 2, Moreno 2, Navarro 0, Razon 0.

Quarters: 8-13, 35-29, 50-51, 75-67

Pichay looks into chess...

From page A23

This was not the first time that the chess federation is probing players involved in ugly activities.

During the presidency of the late lawyer Arturo "Art" Borjal of the defunct Philippine Chess Federation, four players were meted one year suspensions for game-fixing in the 1988 National Chess Open. *NM Marlon Bernardino*

SPORTSWATCH

SJC derby gets more support

THE SECOND EDITION OF SJC 8–COCK INTERNAtional Derby, slated on Jan. 22, 24 and 26 at San Juan Coliseum, got a big boost yesterday when 20 more gamefowl breeders signed up, bringing to more than 100 the number of confirmed entries. "This event has become the breeders choice because of its favorable format, where each participant automatically becomes a co-host and gets 50 percent of derby income," said host and SJC owner Rodolfo Pineda. Likewise, winners stand to receive a staggering guaranteed prize of P6 million. Pol Estrellado of Laguna, who bagged the championship in last year's first SJC International Derby, committed three entries this year as he vowed to defend the title against a tough field of combatants from the USA, Mexico, Japan, Malaysia, Guam and Saipan.

Roligon derby stakes P4M

ROLIGON MEGA COCKPIT CELEBRATES ITS 17th year by staging the RMC Anniversary 6–cock derby on Jan. 30, Feb. 1, 3, 5 and 7. Promoter Rolly Ligon decided to adopt the same format that drew 429 entries in last year's edition: guaranteed prize of P4 million for an entry fee of P11,000. Participants who will score two points in the elimination rounds (2–cock) on Jan. 30, Feb. 1 and 3 will share in the P100,000 day prize. The fastest win champion (based on last two fights in the championship round) will receive P500,000 while his handler gets P100,000. The second placer will receive P100,000. Reservation of cockhouses is open. Call 851–2275, 833–1638 at 852–9812 (Shirley, Jona or Tiling).

SMART BACKS MANGO TEE: Smart Communications is one of the major sponsors of the 23rd Mango Tee member-guest tournament set Feb 7-11, Signing the sponsorship agreement are (from left) ACCI golf chair Jun Galindez, Smart Communications Infinity head Julie Carceller and Ed Lacson, chair of the 23rd Mango Tee.

Team Santos stakes ABL title

FORMER JETSKI CHAMP RICHIE SANTOS KNOWS all too well that fashion trends come and go, yet in the Ateneo Basketball League (ABL), his Team Santos has stuck to a fashion statement of wearing a bulls eye on their backs year-in and year-out.

The only three-time defending champion in the ABL's six-year history, Team Santos will stake its title in Season 7 of the most successful local alumni league starting Jan. 13 at various venues.

Bannered by UAAP and ABL Legends, Team Santos enters the 2007 ABL season as favorites to win the league's premiere division – the Bibiano Ouano division.

The returning players are former pros Rainier Sison and Jec Chia, UAAP veterans Sonny Tadeo, Mon Tioseco, BJ Calo, Epok Quimpo, LA Mumar, Jean Alabanza, Marco Benitez, Paul Tan-Chi, Eric Yao, Paolo Timbang, and JR Elmido, and playground legends Luigi Avancena, Terence Tang and Marvin Sioco.

Rounding up the roster are sports analyst TJ Manotoc and Richie Santos, Cinderella's VP for Marketing who owns the league's single game scoring record of 75 points. Team managers are Jolly Diaz and Tim Tan.

This year's ABL field is expected to bloat to around 190 teams from last year's 151 teams. These teams will be scattered among 29 divisions, including a Women's division and the Fr. Teri Katigbak divisions for current grade school students.

Macau runner-up finish proves Javi's potential

WINDING UP ROK JUNIOR OVERALL runner-up in the recent Asian Karting Open Championship buttresses the potential of JeT Racing Team Captain Javi Benitez to make it big internationally.

Only 12, Benitez created ripples at the Kartodromo Race Circuit in Macau with his fiery rally from the back of the pack to finish second behind eventual champion Rio Haryanto of Indonesia.

The feat inspired Benitez to undergo rigid training in Europe this year.

"Though he missed the kickoff leg in Malaysia last April, Benitez really gave a determined fight to the very end," said Elson Carpio, Javi's personal coach. "I believe he's got the attitude and the potential to make it big in the international karting scene.

"He needs a little more improvement on his racing craft. And the training in Europe will really help him develop that distinct character as a world-class Filipino karter."

Prior to the race, he was just five points behind Haryanto. Though he was the lone Filipino and it was his first time to race in a full grid of 36 karters, Javi displayed intensity and consistency on the first race.

He was running third going into the last lap when the karter behind him did a nasty dive that pulled Javi down to fifth. Another nasty dive in the pre-final race sent Javi out of the race and title-contention as he ended 32nd going into the final race.

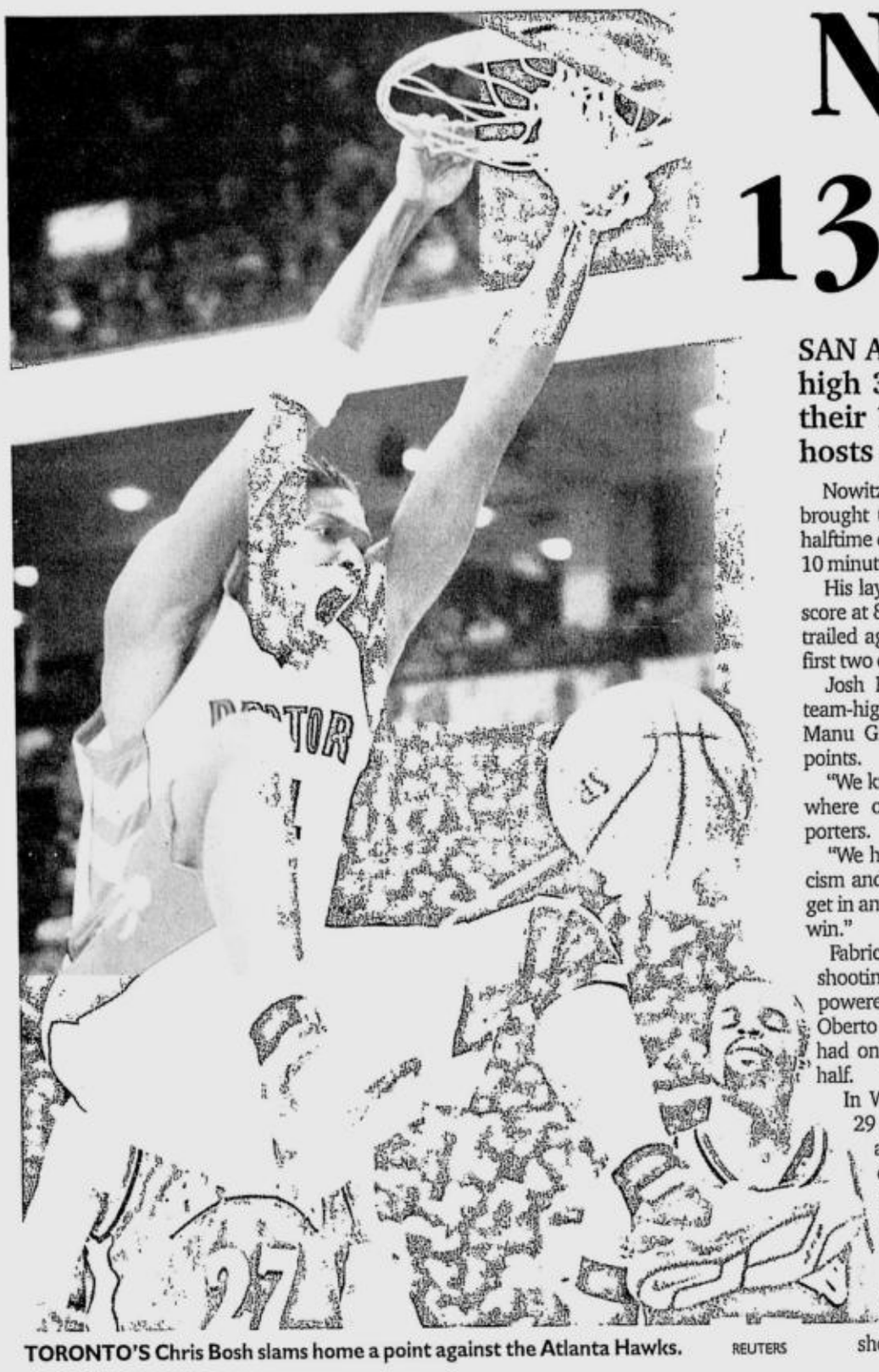
But that didn't dampen his spirit as he blazed from the back of the grid to finish 11th in the final race which was enough to salvage the overall runner-up.

Even more impressive, Benitez, who's backed by Bingo Bonanza Corp., Henry Sy Jr. of SM companies and Willy Ocier of Pacific Online Systems and Belle Corp.; posted the fastest laptime of 51.163 seconds which was better than the time of 51.5 posted by Haryanto.

"His laptime only proved his great promise as a race driver," said Carpio. "With a little more spunk and maturity as a racer, Javi has the makings of a future Filipino international champion."

JAVI Benitez of Jet Racing poses with the Philippine Flag when he bagged the overall ROK Junior runner-up crown in the Asian Karting Open Championship finals at the Kartodromo Race Circuit in Macau.

Nowitzki, Mavs log 13th straight victory



TORONTO'S Chris Bosh slams home a point against the Atlanta Hawks. REUTERS

SAN ANTONIO—DIRK NOWITZKI SCORED A SEASON-high 36 points as the Dallas Mavericks rallied to win their 13th consecutive game with a 90-85 victory over hosts San Antonio on Friday.

Nowitzki, who also had eight rebounds, brought the Mavs back from an 11-point halftime deficit with nine points in the final 10 minutes.

His lay-up with 2:27 remaining tied the score at 82 apiece and the Mavericks never trailed again after being dominated in the first two quarters.

Josh Howard added 18 points and a team-high 12 rebounds for Dallas, while Manu Ginobili led San Antonio with 25 points.

"We know we can win pretty much anywhere on the road," Nowitzki told reporters.

"We have the kind of depth and athleticism and defense that we feel like we can get in any building and look good and get a win."

Fabricio Oberto's 14 points on 7-for-7 shooting and Tim Duncan's 13 points powered San Antonio in the first half, but Oberto did not score again and Duncan had only five more points in the second half.

In Washington, Gilbert Arenas scored 29 of his 35 points in the first half and added a season-high 12 assists Friday, leading the Washington Wizards past the Los Angeles Clippers 116-105 and drawing "M-V-P!" chants from the sellout crowd.

Arenas, who turns 25 on Saturday, scored 13 points in the first quarter, 16 in the second on 7-for-8 shooting, but was only 3-for-10 the rest of the way. He also had seven rebounds in the Wizards' seventh win in eight games.

Caron Butler had 27 points—his fifth consecutive game with at least 20—six assists and five rebounds for Washington, which is 13-3 at home. Antawn Jamison added 19 points, and Brendan Haywood contributed 13 points and 12 rebounds to help the Wizards put up the most points scored against Los Angeles this season.

Elton Brand had 29 points and 12 rebounds for the Clippers, now 3-12 on the road. Chris Kaman added 17 points and 10 rebounds.

In other games, it was Orlando 106, Charlotte 74; Toronto 105, Atlanta 92; New Jersey 91, Chicago 86; Boston 128, Memphis 119; Dallas 90, San Antonio 85; Minnesota 104, Philadelphia 102, OT; Houston 100, Utah 86; Cleveland 95, Milwaukee 86; Phoenix 108, Miami 80; New York 111, Seattle 93; LA Lakers 123, Denver 104

At East Rutherford, New Jersey, Vince Carter and Jason Kidd combined to score 10 straight points down the stretch, and New Jersey rallied from an 18-point deficit to beat Chicago for the 10th straight time at home.

Carter finished with 21 points, while Kidd had 17 points and 10 rebounds to help the Nets earn their first three-game winning streak. Richard Jefferson scored 18 points and Bostjan Nachbar, making his first start as a Net, had 16.

Luol Deng scored 22 points to lead Chicago.

At Toronto, Chris Bosh scored 21 points in helping Toronto send Atlanta to its eighth straight loss.

Joey Graham tied a career high with 19 points and had eight rebounds for the Raptors, who never trailed.

Marvin Williams scored 24 points for the Hawks.

Backup point guard Jose Calderon added a season-high 12 assists and 12 points for the Raptors, who had five players score in double figures.

At Orlando, Florida, Dwight Howard had 22 points, 12 rebounds and four blocks to lead Orlando over Charlotte for its third straight victory.

Jameer Nelson added 20 points, going 4-of-6 from 3-point range for the Magic, who limited Charlotte to 29 percent shooting in the game. Reserve forward Trevor Ariza had 10 points and nine rebounds.

Matt Carroll led the Bobcats with 19 points, while Raymond Felton had 11 points and seven assists.

At Memphis, Tennessee, Wally Szczerbiak scored 26 points and Tony Allen added 20 to lead seven players in double figures for Boston, which won for only the second time in nine games.

Ryan Gomes, Brian Scalabrine and Delonte West scored 16 points apiece for Boston, which is without leading scorer Paul Pierce because of an injured left foot. Al Jefferson had 12 and Kendrick Perkins 10.

Mike Miller and Pau Gasol led the Grizzlies with 24 points each, and Miller had 14 assists.

At Minneapolis, Kevin Garnett hit a 15-footer with Samuel Dalembert's hand in his face as the buzzer sounded in overtime to lift Minnesota past Philadelphia for its third win in a row. *AP*

Peter, Toney set for rematch to settle heavyweight dispute

HOLLYWOOD, FLORIDA—THERE WAS no consensus over who won the first fight between Samuel Peter and James Toney. And, not surprisingly, the two heavyweights are disagreeing again.

"I won the first one and I'll teach him another lesson," Peter said.

"They stole the first fight from me, but they won't again," Toney said.

On Saturday night, someone finally will be proven right.

Barely three months after Peter (27-1, 22 knockouts) took a split 12-round decision over Toney (69-5, with three draws and 43 KOs) in their first fight, the pair will meet again in a rematch ordered by a September vote of the WBC board of governors.

The winner of this elimination fight gets a mandatory bout for the WBC title against champion Oleg Maskaev, who claimed that belt with a surprising knockout of Hasim Rahman in August and defended it last month with a unanimous decision over Peter Okhello.

The 26-year-old Peter is 1.85 meters (6-foot-1) and 113 kilos (249 pounds); the 38-year-old Toney is 1.75 meters (5-foot-9), 106 kilos (234 pounds). Peter is the WBC's No. 1-ranked challenger for the heavyweight belt, one spot ahead of Toney.

"Everybody dreams of the green belt, that green belt with 160 countries embroidered on it," said fight promoter Don King. "It's something that everyone seeks. It goes with the biblical scripture. Knock and the door shall be opened. Seek and ye shall find. Ask and you shall be given. Know what I mean?"

Peter, a Nigerian who long has been considered one of the biggest punchers in the heavyweight ranks, still can't quite figure out why this fight is necessary.

He won by convincing 116-111 margins on two judges' cards on Sept. 2, yet trailed 115-112 on the third card. Many ringside observers thought he won the fight, but others disagreed and Toney—a former IBF middleweight, super middleweight and cruiserweight champion—immediately cried foul.

"I'm not done with this punk," Toney said after being handed his first loss since 1997.

Sure enough, the WBC agreed that Toney wasn't done with Peter and quickly ordered the rematch, a decision that obviously didn't sit well with the Nigerian.

"They want to take my future back," Peter said. "But nobody can shut my light off. ... I won the first fight. I should be fighting to be heavyweight champion of the world. They cannot stop me. No one can stop me." *AP*

Singh takes 1-shot Mercedes lead

KAPALUA, HAWAII—VIJAY SINGH had one bad swing Friday, but it wasn't enough for him to lose the lead in the rain, whipping wind and eventual sunshine at the Mercedes-Benz Championship.

Singh pulled his tee shot in the native grasses on the par-5 18th hole, hit a remarkable recovery and escaped with a par, giving him his second straight 4-under 69 and a one-shot lead over Trevor Immelman and Will MacKenzie in the PGA Tour opener.

MacKenzie had a chance to tie until missing a 10-foot putt, giving him a 70. Immelman, the rookie of the year in 2006, birdied two of his last three holes for a 68.

The elements changed, but the Plantation course at Kapalua remained a stern test.

The start of the second round was delayed 1 hour, 20 minutes because of a light rain that began overnight and didn't stop until an hour after the round started. The trade wind picked up strength to 35 mph gusts as it tried to shoo the clouds away. Singh thought it was nearly unplayable as he made the turn in a tie for the lead, but it calmed down enough for him to pick up a few more birdies and reach 8-under 138.

"I'd like it to calm down a little bit," Singh said.

But he had few complaints about his position. He has finished a combined four shots behind three-time defending champion Stuart Appleby the last three years, and has not finished out of the top 10 since the winners-only tournament moved here in 1999.

Appleby shot 72 and was seven shots behind in his bid to tie a PGA Tour record with his fourth straight win at the same event. *AP*

CHAMP Dinara Safina of Russia eyes the ball during her match against Martina Hingis of Sweden during the Women's Hardcourt tennis championships in Gold Coast. Safina, younger sister of former men's No. 1 Marat Safin, won 6-3, 3-6, 7-5 to claim the title. AFP

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Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres

Young golfers rule '06

By Musong R. Castillo

THE HIGH POINTS OUTNUMbered the low ones as Philippine golf enjoyed a comeback of sorts in the year that passed.

Pocket-sized Dottie Ardina won six international tournaments, including the 11-12 bracket in the Junior World championship in San Diego, and Michael Bibat rallied like crazy to bag the bronze medal in the 15th Asian Games in Doha, Qatar.

Ardina shared the Junior World stage with Cyna Rodriguez, the 13-14 champion, and Mia Legaspi, the 7-8 winner, even as Abegail Arevalo won the Little People's championship in Illinois the week before.

Then there was Juvic Pagunsan, presently the face of Philippine professional golf, and Frankie Miñoza, the revered Bukidnon native and the best Filipino shotmaker in the region a few years back, making their marks in the Asian Tour.

Pagunsan's second place finish in the Hong Kong Open and Minoza's runner-up effort in the Volvo Asian Masters in Thailand put an end to a year that started with Pagunsan humbling Minoza in The Country Club Invitational to signal the changing of the guards.

Jay Bayron won the RP Amateur for the first time to announce his coming as the new ace in his division and Carmelette Villaroman regained her old place in the sport after motherhood got in the way and stymied what many saw was a promising career.

Villaroman's victory in the RP women's amateur came after she was dropped from the national pool.

Australian Scott Strange foiled Pagunsan and Co. to rule the Philippine Open at Wack Wack even as majority of the pros contented themselves scratching a living in driving ranges with no solid local professional local circuit to speak of.

Samsung continued to back junior golf development through the Interscholastics series and an amateur tour while the National Caddies' Open, after a second successful season, produced a third placer in the RP Am in Mark Fernando.

Canlubang regained its old place of prominence with a men's regular-seniors championship double in the PAL Interclub and Nike extended its dominance of the Fil-Am fields for the third straight year, the same streak enjoyed by the JR Tanpinco-Gerard Cantada combine in the Konica U-Bix Pro-Am.

Meanwhile, Jayvie Agojo, the pretty, former age-group star now enrolled at Pepperdine U in the United States, failed to make the Asian Games team after being unceremoniously dropped from the roster.

Reasons were sketchy, although there were reports that Agojo and dad Jun had a misunderstanding with the national team coaching staff on its rigid policy against parents attending practices and games.

Overall, though, RP golf got a passing grade in 2006, with the national amateur program continuing to get a boost from port services magnate Ricky Razon's International Container Terminal Services Inc.

Tall and hefty, Bibat provided golf's lone medal in the Asian Games, his bronze finish shining like gold considering the level of competition in Doha.

With the Philippine Open scheduled next week reset due to lack of sponsors, local golf buffs are praying that Pagunsan show fine form when he joins the world's best shotmakers in the second stop of the US PGA Tour in the Sony Open in Hawaii starting on Jan. 12.

DOTTIE ARDINA: World Junior champion and winner of five international events.

RP Pro-Am opens doors to foreigners

TO SPICE UP COMPETITION, foreign professionals will be allowed to join the Konica Minolta National Pro-Am set Jan. 31 to Feb. 3 at the Riviera's Langer course in Silang, Cavite.

This was announced yesterday by the organizing committee of the nation's only one-ball, twosome event headed by Edilberto B. Bravo, the U-Bix Corp. founder who revived the Pro-Am in 2001.

But the foreign entries are restricted from teaming up with amateurs having indices of five-and-below as of January 2007.

"This is to protect the entire field and preserve the integrity of our tournament," said Bravo, who led the revival of the event that was founded in 1958, together with the National Golf Association of the Philippines (NGAP).

The foreign contingent will join the Top 30 local professionals recognized by the organizing committee. The format calls for a team consisting of a pro and an amateur hitting one ball alternately from tee to green.

Gerard Cantada and JR Tanpinco are set to defend their crown while they gun for an unprecedented fourth straight victory in the event that gives the champion team nearly P.5 million from the total pot of P1.7 million.

Noli Kempis and Erwin Vinluan, the first champions in 2001, are planning a comeback. So with 2002 champions Raul and Paul Miñoza.

Call the NGAP at 525-6987 and 524-5160, or The Riviera at 888-9127, (046) 414-2868.

Flame Tree tourney slated at Sta. Elena

OVER 200 PARTICIPANTS PLAY for a cause as the first Flame Tree Golf Tournament blasts off tomorrow at the Sta. Elena Golf Club in Cabuyao, Laguna.

Club members, dependents and guests have signed up for the fund-raising event of the Sta. Elena Ladies Chapter.

Rio Co, president of the Sta. Elena ladies chapter, said part of the proceeds of the tourney will be used to set up the "Caddies Welfare Fund and finance their participation in Federation League and WGAP events, among others.

Fabulous giveaways and valuable raffle prizes await the entries who will be playing the three nines of the multi-awarded golf club. Also at stake is a hole-in-one prize of a seven-night Mexican Riviera Cruise on board Royal Caribbean International with airline ticket to Los Angeles via American Airlines.

With Co in the organizing committee of the event supported by the Rustan's Commercial Corp., are Lily Chan as tournament chair, Tami Leung, Lucy Sy, Bea Baluyot, Marilen Bantug and Angie Co members.

PSC, POC to address concern of foreign-bound athletes

By Marc Anthony Reyes

NATIONAL ATHLETES WHO WILL be tapped to go through the ambitious Olympic training program need not worry about leaving their families while on extended training abroad.

The needs of the families of the estimated 30 athletes who will embark on foreign training and competitions starting this March will be subsidized, according to Philippine Sports Commission chair William "Butch" Ramirez.

Ramirez said the Philippine Olympic Committee is also joining the PSC in the plan to alleviate the concerns of most national athletes whose families rely mainly on them financially.

"We are aware that there are athletes even here in Rizal Memorial who share their food from the cafeteria with their families because of lack of money," Ramirez said.

He earlier announced that First Gentleman Mike Arroyo will spearhead the Olympic training program that will bring athletes of at least 12 sports disciplines to different parts of the world to get immersed in training with world-class athletes.

"It is important they train abroad for team building and to make them focused on training and free from distractions," said Ramirez.

Under the plan, the families who will be left behind by the athletes will be given at least one sack of rice a month.

"Rep. Peping (Cojuangco, president of the POC) and I have decided that we'll make this an Olympic training program 'Pinoy style' because we can't just take these athletes away from their families just like that," he said.

If China and other Socialist countries conduct world-class athletic programs by picking up athletes from faraway provinces and getting them quartered away from home, the Philippines, according to Ramirez, can also do the same with emphasis on the country's family-oriented style.

Top athletes in track and field, swimming, diving, boxing, taekwondo, archery, fencing, lawn tennis, weightlifting, gymnastics and shooting will be tapped to undergo the extensive foreign training program in pursuit of the first Olympic gold in Beijing next year.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Sunday January 7, 2007

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Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5		Ringside		PBA				TV Patrol World	Goal Bull (6:45 PM)		Bored UK (7:45 PM)		Sharon (8:45 PM)	TBA	TBA (9:45 PM)	Worst Case Scenario		Arma-Armas Premyo Sa Ritsbo	Simbang Gabi
ABS-CBN 2	Your Song	Lovespell		The Buzz															
AXN														CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 6)					
bTV		The Basketball Show	NBA Action	NBA: Pistons @ Bulls					NBA Jam Local	EUROleague: Ros. 11 Barca vs CSKA Moscow			NBA Live	NBA Fantasy Hoops	NBA: Pistons @ Bulls				
Cinema One				Ako Legal Wife				Kung Ako Na Ang Sana				The Fourth King		6-8: Pamela-Mela Wan				Bulletproof	
Cinemax				Naked Gun 33 1/3: Final Insult			Race And Honor (5:25 PM)			Sneakers				Left Behind: World At War					
CNN	Next@CNN	World News	Living Golf: Living Golf Main Salvat Of Life	World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	World News	Inside The Middle East: CNN Bus. Traveler: Global Offer: Global Challenges	World News	World Sport	Talk Asia	Living Golf: Bewitched Main Salvat of Life	World News	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Late Edition Live	
Crime/Suspense		Profiler		Without A Trace		Law and Order: Special Victims Unit		CIS Chronicles: Cold Case Files		Revelations		Threshold		Without A Trace		Oz		Dominick Dunne's Power, Privilege & Justice	
Discovery Channel	Connect	Perfect Disaster		American Chopper		I Shouldn't Be Alive		Mythbusters		Hour Asia		Hour Asia		Best of Discovery 2006				Power Zone	
Disney Channel	Maya & Miguel	Totally Spies		Kim Possible	Lilo & Stitch	Hannah Montana	American Dragon Yr. 2	Emperor's New School	Suite Life Of Zack And Cody	Mr. Bean	Wonderful World Of Disney			Amerocd's Funniest Home Video	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mortified	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN				Atlantic Coast Conf. Women's Tech Vs Duke				NFL Playoffs: NFC Wildcard						NFL Greatest Moments	Dakar Rally '07 Euromotocs	NFL Playoffs: AFC Wildcard			
ETC		ET Weekend		Insider Weekend	Rated Ch! 6	Beach Girls		One Tree Hill		Amerocd's Next Top Model		Friends	Simple Life 4	Project Runway		Rated Ch! 6	Insider Weekend	Saturday Night Live	
ETC 2nd Avenue		Blow Out 2		Today Show - 1 Hour - Version		Dateline		Trading Spouses		NBC Nightly News	WSJR	Nanny 911		The Director		Showbiz Moms and Dads		NBC Nightly News	Hollywood Cnd On Line
Fox News		Beltway Boys	Fox News Watch	Fox Report Saturday		Heartland With John Kasich		The Line Up		The Journal Editorial Report	Beltway Boys	Fox & Friends Sunday						Fox News Live	
GMA 7	Kapuso Movie Festival				S-Files			Mahiwagang Baul		Starstruck: The Next Level		Mel & Joey		All Star K		Daddy Di Do Du		Sunday Night Box Office	
Hallmark Channel				Doc Martin II		The Freediver				MacBeth				Whiskey Echo				Mesopmer Murders: Straw Women	
HBO			Criminal (3:45 PM)			Mother (5:15 PM)				Richie Rich			HBO Central In January	Mercury Rising				Tremors	
Hero TV	Knights Ramune NG	Pretty Cure	Starship Operators	Power Rangers Ninja Storm	Mask Rider Faiz	Justarzers	Power Rangers Dino Thunder	Suzuka	Offside	Baki The Grappler	GPX Cyber Formula	G3	H3 TV Special	Weekend Marathon Yu-Gi-Oh/Upload Weekends				PeaceMaker	Starship Operators
IBC 13		Ang Bang Hanap Mo?	Custom Rides	Phil World Pool Championship							Mommy Academy	Pinoy Action Hits				Iyo Ang Kalaruhgan	EL SHADDAI		
JackTV				Comedy Central	Premium Blend	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	The Daily Show Jon Stewart	Distraction	Banzai	American Dad	Family Guy	WWE Smackdown				South Park	Drawn Together	Crank Yankers	Dr. Katz
Lifestyle Network	Embellish This	DIY: Crafts	The Great Adventure	Your Private Island	Fine Living Special		Barefoot Contessa	Everyday Italian	Wolfgang Puck	Food Network Special		E! Entertainment Special						Fashion Trance	
MTV Philippines			MTV News		Homecoming	Score	Boiling Points			Punk'd	Wildboyz							MTV Screen	
MYX		Pinoy MYX Countdown				Take 5	MYX Bandastio	MYX News	Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Presents			MYX Hit Chart			MYX Backtrax	MYXlog
National Geographic	Mad Labs	Mega Asia		Best Of The Week		Nat Geo Investigates: Sleepwalking Murders		Mad Labs	I Didn't Know That	Mega Asia: Mumbai		Best Of The Week		ShowReal Asia: Chasing Earthquakes		Nat Geo Investigates: Hamang By A Thrdkd		Nat Geo Investigates: Stigmata	
NBN		Tinig Ng Bayan		World Pool Championship									TM Taxo Masters Challenge	The Sports List		Best And Brightest			Unlimited Living
Net 25	INC Chronicles (Filipino)	Quadriga	The Planet	INC Chronicles (English)	INC Chronicles (Filipino)	Ang Pagbubuyag		Net 25 Weekend Report	DWTV Journal Weekend Edition	Tribe	Convergence	INC Chronicles (English)	INC Chronicles (Filipino)	Ang Tamang Daan		Net 25 Weekend Report	In Focus	DWTV Journal Weekend Edition	Euromaxx
Nickelodeon	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	Zoey 101	Ned's Declassified School Survival Guide	Asian Anime Fest: Avatar: The Legend Of Aang		The X's	Danny Phantom	Troitz	SpongeBob SquarePants	All That	Zoey 101	Ned's Declassified School Survival Guide	Romeo	Naturally Sadie	All That	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			Bakit Ikaw Pa Rin?	Kappa Mikay			Working Boys				Imortal				The Way They Were				Gusto Ko Nang Lumigaya
Qtv		Lois And Clark		Elementar Gerad		Bongga Ka Star		Ang Pinaka		Pop Star Kids		May Trabaho Ka		Sunday Super Sine				Dahil Sa Iyong Pagsisin	
RPN 9						World Poker Tour		WWE Experience		WWE Smackdown				Sunday's Big Event					The Working President
SBN 21				Buhay Pinoy		Shepards Voice		New Life				Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		Gabay At Aksyon			
Solar Sports				Motoring Today					Bikini Destination									World Game Around The World (9:30 PM)	
Star Movies		The Wedding Date			The Aviator						The Grudge (7:25 PM)			Star Wars: Episode IV - A New Hope					
Star World		The Office	Two And A Half Men	Desire Table For Three		Business Week Asia	Travel Asia	Ed				Oprah Prime Time		NCIS		Desire Table For Three		Hollywood Shootouts	Oprah Prime Time
Studio 23								Studio 23 Presents Special Edition					Gag Ito!	US Girls	Desperate Housewives (9:45 PM)		Digital Tour (10:45 PM)	Badminton Extreme	
UnTV				KNC Show	Ang Daling Daan			Usapang Cristiano			Y-Speak	Believer TV		Ang Daling Daan					

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Sunday BIZ

Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

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IN THIS ISSUE

■ **Buckets, fine crystals** for sale on India's 5th Avenue /B2

Brit GM wants people to have lives beyond work

New Avon exec aims to increase sales and achieve worklife balance among the firm's employees

EXERCISE is part of Bob Briddon's life

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

SOMETHING BOTHERED BOB Briddon when he took over the post of general manager in Avon Philippines last year—Filipinos, or at least Avon employees, do not go on vacation.

Briddon, a British, who is used to the European ways where people take off for six weeks a year to go on a holiday, found it surprising that in the Philippines people take only two to three days off.

And usually it is not to go off on a vacation but to take care of a matter that cannot be handled within the workweek.

Briddon feels it is very important to have a good worklife balance and has set it as a personal goal to improve the quality of life of Avon Cosmetics Inc. employees. He says he will review the employee benefits and privileges and see if a basket of options can be created to improve these.

"I want to take out some of the work we do and reduce the number of hours people work. I want them to have other interests outside of Avon," he says.

The new GM himself does a good job of working hard and enjoying his life—he makes sure he sees a new place in the Philippines weekly. He keeps fit by playing squash or tennis and runs at least four times a week.

Briddon's goal of improving worklife balance is of course on top of his career goal of increasing sales of Avon Philippines, now the 12th biggest market for the direct selling firm in the world in terms of volume and profits. And going after the Flame Award—Avon's highest sales award for a country.

Briddon takes over the Philippine post at a good time—Avon Philippines is the number one in sales in the Asia Pacific region (this excludes Japan and China).

He wants the Philippines to be in the top 10 markets of Avon during his term. The US, where Avon's headquarters are, remains the biggest market.

The new Avon chief has some aces up his sleeves to achieve the sales targets but does not want the plans revealed yet. He does say that Avon will be more visible and will increase advertising spend, particularly on TV, this year, to achieve its goals.

It is also set on coming up with a new marketing tag to entice more people to either join the direct selling business or to buy Avon products.

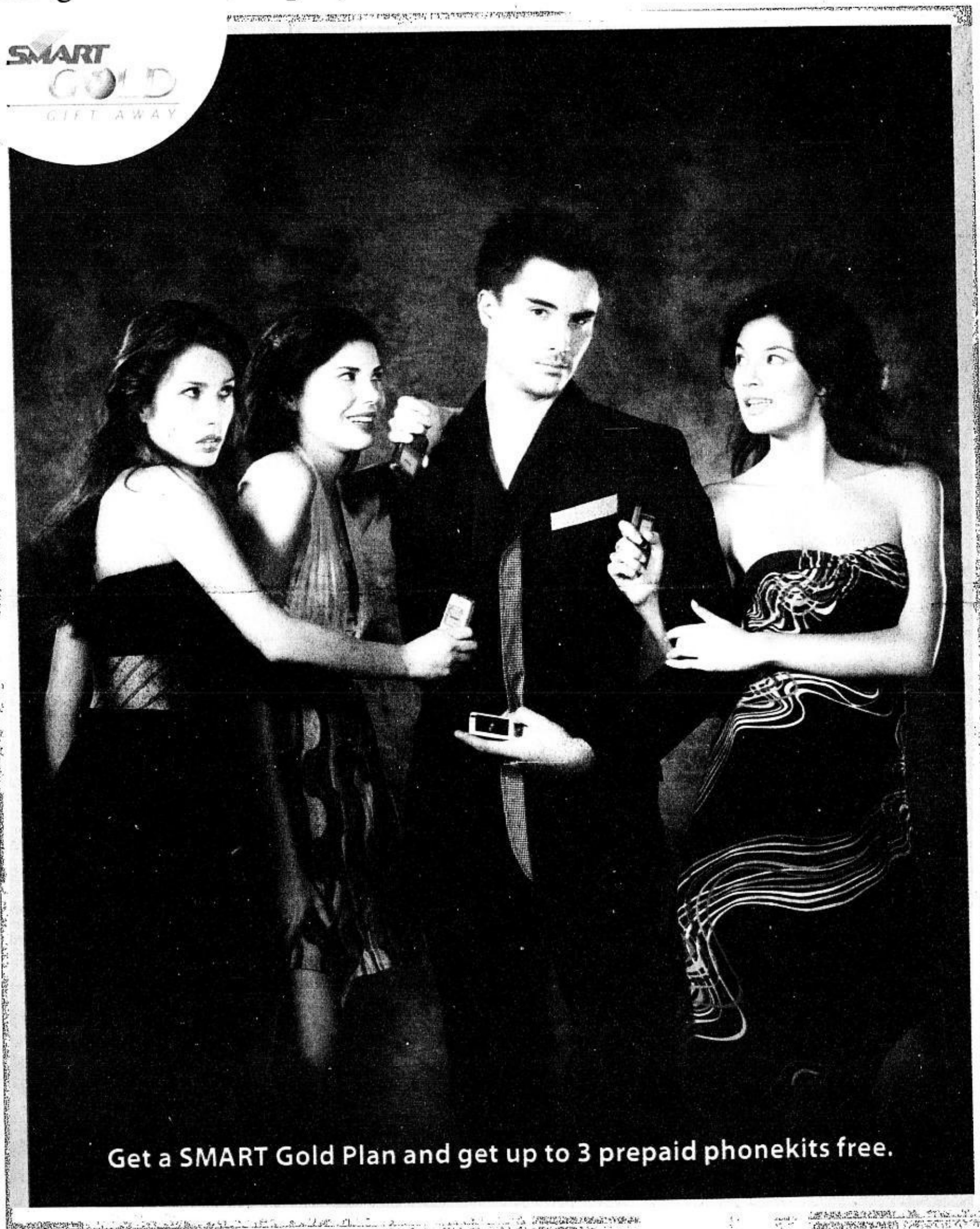
Last year, as part of its global initiative, Avon's ads took on an entrepreneurial line—that the firm is offering people a way to make money.

The firm believes big opportunities in skin care remain in the Philippines. While Avon is

BRIT GM/ B2

THE GM is an "accidental marketing man"

SMART GOLD GIFT AWAY



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PLAN 1800	Nokia 6151 Nokia 6233	Nokia 1600 Nokia 1110i	Nokia 1600 Nokia 1110i	Nokia 1600 Nokia 1110i
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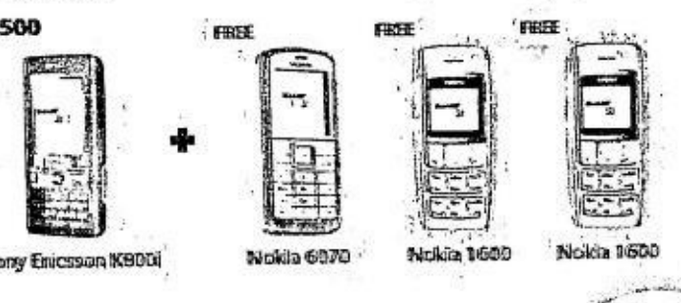

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SMART TAYO

Buckets, fine crystal for sale on India's 5th Ave.

NEW DELHI—AT Khan Market in New Delhi shoppers can get a quick haircut for 30 rupees (68 cents), browse a variety of plastic buckets filled with bargains, or spend $6,000 on an exquisite Swarovski crystal swan.

This shabby parade of stalls housing slick international brand showrooms alongside cluttered "mom and pop" stores is the most expensive retail real estate in India.

Khan Market rose 17 places to 24th place in an annual global survey by real estate service firm Cushman & Wakefield, while New York's Fifth Avenue, Hong Kong's Causeway Bay and the Avenue des Champs Elysees in Paris took the top three spots.

The cost of new tenancies in prime spots went up 75 percent to $180 per square foot per year in Khan Market in the first five months of this year, compared to $1,350 on Fifth Avenue, according to figures from Cushman & Wakefield.

The scramble for space here is a prime example of India's hyper-accelerated economic growth knocking its head against bad infrastructure and a slow bureaucracy.

With overhead wires tangled across the U-shaped complex's unevenly-paved lane, walls bar-

A SHOPKEEPER sells posters of Hindu deities outside a showroom at Khan Market, shabby parade of stalls housing slick international brand showrooms alongside cluttered "mom and pop" stores is the most expensive retail real estate in India. REUTERS

nacled with hulking ventilator units and the meaty waft from the kebab stalls, there is no mistaking Khan Market for those other illustrious addresses.

"Khan Market is definitely not the Champs Elysees," said Isabelle Levens, a Parisian now living in New Delhi who sounded surprised to hear the two places mentioned in the same sentence.

"It's just the nearest shops to the children's school," she explained as she browsed for toys.

It is precisely the market's closeness to some of Delhi's most expensive residential streets that has seen rents swell, even as around 30 low-value businesses continue to prosper thanks to rents frozen at 1950s prices because of rent-control laws.

After decades of poor city planning, and with the municipal authorities belatedly sealing up illegal retail districts, Delhi's relatively few legally zoned retail spaces such as Khan Market are becoming ever more valuable.

"There is such a shortage of space in Delhi that there's a huge upward pressure on rents," said Sanjay Dutt, a Cushman & Wakefield executive.

Location, location, location

Many well-paid foreign diplomats, journalists and other expats live close to Khan Market in leafy gated neighborhoods, alongside Indian politicians and wealthy business executives.

Foreigners and well-groomed Indians head to the market's cramped grocers to pick up a few items, shop assistants trail behind carrying their baskets.

Younger middle-class Indians wearing sunglasses and Western fashions come from further afield, squeezing between parked cars and dodging stray dogs to step inside one of several smart cafes.

"Indians are just used to these kinds of dilapidated conditions," said Sanjiv Mehra, the current president of the Khan Market Traders Association, who sits most days at his desk at the back of his small toy shop.

On the wall, next to a miniature Hindu shrine, hangs a photograph of his late father, Dilbagh Mehra.

He was one of the market's original tenants when it was built by the government in 1950 as a rehabilitation project, housing businesses of Hindu refugees fleeing from what is now Pakistan during the partition of the subcontinent.

"He came here in 1947 with 643 rupees in his pocket," said Mehra of his father.

Mehra's family now runs eight shops in the market. He says he could make much more money giving up his mostly low-value businesses and renting out the spaces to foreign luxury brands.

"But then what else would I do with my days?" he said.

Foreigners complain

Traders say jeans company Lee Cooper was the first international brand to move in the early 1990s, when India began to open up its economy to foreign investment.

Lee Cooper has since left, but clothing brands Levi Strauss & Co., Nike and the United Colours of Benetton, along with Subway and McDonald's restaurants, are some of the dozen or so international companies to be found here.

Swarovski, the Austrian crystal company, had been trying to get into Khan Market for more than three years before it bagged a tenancy here in April.

The company pays 350,000 rupees ($7,830) a month in rent for 434 square feet (40 square metres) of shop space, said Vishnu Sharma, one of Swarovski's Indian partners. He wishes he got smarter surroundings for the money.

"They do complain about how the market is so shabby looking, or foreign customers do anyway," he said. "Indians are used to it ... I would love to see Khan Market look more like Fifth Avenue." But Sheila Dikshit, Delhi's chief minister, says she is in no rush to see it made over.

"It may not be very chic or smart," she told Reuters, "but it's got a warmth you don't find in many places any more." *Reuters*

PSE slates 3nd 'Bull Run' on Jan. 14

PROMINENT POLITICAL AND BUSINESS LEADERS WILL ONCE again converge at the Fort Bonifacio Global City grounds in Taguig City, Metro Manila for the 3rd annual Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) fun run on Sunday, January 14, 2007.

Francis Lim, PSE President and CEO, expects over a thousand participants to join the annual fun run, dubbed PSE Bull Run, which is now sanctioned by the Philippine Amateur Track and Field Association (PATAFA).

"It is my fervent hope that we can hit two birds with one stone by holding the PSE Bull Run," Mr. Lim explained. "We promote health consciousness and at the same time we create added awareness about our surging stock market."

Local stock prices, as tracked by the PSEi, closed last year at 2,982.54 points, or 42.3 percent more than its 2,096.05 level in 2005, and its highest mark after it hit 2,990.96 points on April 7, 1997. The index also posted last year its fastest growth rate since it recorded a 154-percent annualized hike in 1993.

"Based on such performance, the stock market is really a good alternative investment where ordinary Filipinos can keep their savings," Lim noted.

Dignitaries who have supported earlier Bull Run events included former President Fidel V. Ramos, Senators Franklin Drilon and Pia Cayetano-Sebastian, Finance Secretary Margarito Teves, Trade and Industry Secretary Peter Favila and members of the foreign diplomatic corps, as well as executives from numerous corporations. They have joined up to 1,500 running enthusiasts from all walks of life who are drawn every year to the PSE Bull Run.

Participants can join any of the three PATAFA-sanctioned categories: the three-, five- and 10-kilometer races. Male and female winners in each category will receive prizes and trophies, with all participants getting a chance to win other prizes in a raffle draw to be held right after the end of the races.

The PSE will use donations and registration proceeds from the fun run to support an educational drive, which is designed to foster the growth of the stock market.

For registration and other race details, you may call 747-0383 or 688-7537 to 38 or send a text message to 0917-4475639.

Firm backed by Gates delivers light jet

ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO—Eclipse Aviation has made a major voyage with a very small jet.

The company run by a former Microsoft executive and backed by Bill Gates, has become the second in the US to deliver one of the new planes, known as microjets, "very light jet," or VLJs, which are expected to fill the skies over the next decade. They generally have two engines, five or six passenger seats, automated cockpits and cost half as much as the most inexpensive business jet now in service.

Eclipse president Vern Raburn on Thursday handed keys to the first customer-ordered Eclipse 500 to Jet-Alliance chairman Randall Sanada and David Crowe, an owner-pilot who purchased a share of the aircraft.

"This aircraft represents the end of the development era for Eclipse," Raburn said during a ceremony inside an Eclipse hangar. "We are now a company. We have a transaction. We give Dave an invoice and Dave gives us money."

Thursday's delivery was a significant milestone after a bumpy year in which the 9-year-old manufacturer endured a lengthy federal certification process.

Only privately owned Eclipse Aviation, whose second-largest investor is Microsoft Corp. Chairman Bill Gates, and Cessna Aircraft Co., a unit of Textron Inc., have received Federal Aviation Administration certification for the jets so far. Cessna delivered its first in November.

Crowe kissed the keys to the white aircraft, trimmed in burgundy and blue with a tan leather interior, after taking them from Raburn.

"Ain't she a beauty?" Sanada said.

The Eclipse 500, dubbed the SUV of the skies, currently lists at $1.5 million (euro1.14 million). Raburn said the company hopes to deliver 500 planes to customers this year.

Raburn said Jet-Alliance paid just $995,000 (euro759,200), which included $82,000 (euro62,600) in options. The shared-jet ownership cooperative, based in Westlake Village, California, was one of Eclipse's original customers—hence, the lower sales price.

Eclipse last year received Federal Aviation Administration certification for its test fleet, and the airplane delivered to Jet-Alliance was certified by the FAA on Sunday. Eclipse said that because of the certification, it met its goal of delivering its first plane by the end of 2006.

There currently are 39 planes on the production line at the Albuquerque manufacturing facility, with five ready for customer delivery after the FAA certifies each individual aircraft, Eclipse officials said.

Sanada predicted the Eclipse 500 will change the way people travel, making it more affordable for small businesses or private owners to have aircraft and for air-taxi services to ferry passengers.

VLJs can land on runways as short as 3,000 feet (900 meters), compared with the 4,000 feet (12,00 meters) or 5,000 feet (1,500 meters) required by the smallest jets now being flown. The FAA says there are more than 5,000 small, underused airports in the United States. The National Business Aviation Association defines VLJs as single-pilot jets that weigh 10,000 pounds (4,500 kilograms) or less.

"Before today, only the wealthiest of families and the largest of companies could seriously consider the idea of private jet ownership," Sanada said. "With the delivery of this first Eclipse 500 and the affordable shared ownership model of Jet-Alliance, owners can participate for less than $100,000 (euro76,300)."

Crowe already has flown the airplane and called it the easiest one he ever piloted. He praised its stability during flight and higher flight ceiling compared with piston-driven or turboprop private airplanes.

He also loves the side-stick control, similar to a joystick on a military fighter jet or a television game console. Crowe said it gives the pilot a better sight line to avionics gauges, which are partially obscured on yoke-controlled airplanes.

"There's no interference for the panel," Crowe said. "It's more logical for the pilot. You get what you need right in front of you."

Crowe said that because he plans to fly 150 to 200 hours each year, the Jet-Alliance buy-in a better option for him than purchasing an aircraft outright. Of course, he's excited to play with his new toy.

"The fleet age of private aviation is ancient and the industry was due for an update," Crowe said. "Now you can get an iPod instead of carrying your boom box around."

Brit GM wants . . .

From page B1

the acknowledged leader in fragrance and color (eye makeup and lipsticks) it occupies a far place from leaders Eskinol and Pond's.

"We have over 400,000 agents and we are pushing skin care more," says Briddon. He is confident because he says in most markets, Avon is the number one in skin care.

For lipstick, Avon sells the most than any other brand in the world.

While Briddon finds marketing as his top task for the past years, he is actually an accidental marketing man.

He has a Diploma of Management Services from Kettering College of Technology in Britain. His earlier work experiences were in engineering and shoe manufacturing.

He joined Avon in June 1978 and until April 1987, he was involved with various operational roles in materials handling, inventory control, quality assurance and industrial engineering.

Then he became head of the European Product Development. In this arena he had a lot of contact with marketing as they worked closely for the development of packaging for the products.

He eventually became the director of manufacturing service of the UK and then business unit head for personal care and fragrance for Europe and in 1996 he was made director of planning for Avon UK.

In October 1997 he was promoted to VP for marketing and operations of Avon in South Africa—a challenging position considering the country was still reeling from apartheid. Briddon says they would bring a truck of Avon products that would open on one side in a public place to display and sell the products.

Briddon introduced marketing fundamentals and processes in South Africa.

After a year he was made VP for marketing of the UK market. There he developed a new style and format for the Avon brochure which became the template for all the markets worldwide.

The headquarters in New York eventually got him to become the group VP for marketing and then it was Asia for him—first as GM, for Avon Asia Pacific Hong Kong, briefly as GM of Avon Thailand and now Philippines.

Briddon's appointment in Manila comes in the heels of two ladies—Malu DyBuncio and Ina Quiogue. But it seems to be taking a man to ensure that Avon's Jacks and Jills will not just be "all work and no play."

There's more to meat than just eats

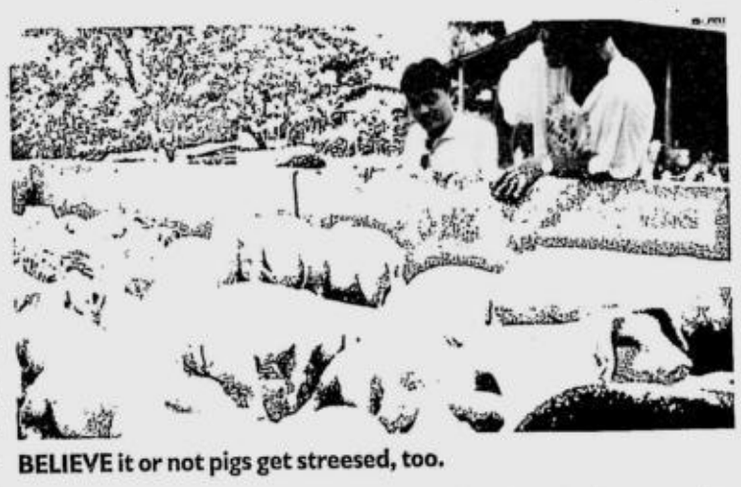
THE MONTEREY NURSERY was recently certified by the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point System.

HACCP is an international, preventive quality management system designed to identify and prevent any potential hazards in the food.

For a food company to earn the right to implement the HACCP system, it must consistently pass the internationally accepted measures of Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and Standard Sanitation Operating Procedures (SSOP). A remarkable program for premises, equipment, personnel, transportation and storage, sanitation and pest control, and recalls must also be in place.

Animals experience a lot of stress from the time that they are separated from their mothers to be raised in meat farms, according to Dr. Leo Obviar, Live Operations Manager of Monterey Foods Corporation.

Piglets go through between 28 to 84 days of adjustment in terms of environment, socialization, and diet. This is why, he says, the period in the nursery is the most critical stage in growing piglets. In the Monterey Nursery, they are given all the vaccines they need, plus proper transition to dry feed, in order to prepare them for the growing period. "It's an in-



BELIEVE it or not pigs get streesed, too.

tensive program," Dr. Obviar points out.

"They are handled a lot, tended a lot. Keeping them free from major diseases is important so they won't have to be medicated ... for them to be free from residues."

Monterey is the first livestock operation in the Philippines to undergo the HACCP. It took the team more than a year to prepare the manuals, to build structures that comply with the high standards of the certifying body, to rehabilitate existing facilities, and to train workers.

"Everyone has to know the concept and process of the certification. We must be attuned to a systematic process so we really have to prepare everybody. The manual must be well written, if needed, written in the vernacular to be understood by workers. Everyone must realize the importance of a well-kept, clean environment so that pigs are rid of potential harm."

Dr. Obviar continues, "We are currently looking into making the piglets more comfortable by setting up air-conditioned houses. This should make them feel happier, eat more, not be stressed out, and produce good quality meats. We are also planning to replicate our systematic process with our contract farms (owned by third parties) for them to implement the same standards of quality of production."

Monterey has more than 250 farms throughout the country. The main farms are located in Batangas, Cavite, and Bulacan, and small farms as far as Ilocos Sur to General Santos. "We will be expanding, to meet the growing market outside of Manila particularly in Cebu, and in key areas in Mindanao," he reports.

The Monterey Meatshop was not always as ubiquitous as it is now. Monterey meats were initially perceived as *pang-sosyal* and expensive, but the very determined brand eventually overcame this marketing hurdle. According to Dr. Obviar, trust has always been Monterey's best selling point—it is something that the company takes very, very seriously so that today, Monterey is known across the country for offering consistently high-quality meats that are budget-friendly.

Monterey was also recently awarded the Seal of Excellence by the Department of Agriculture—National Meat Inspection Services for the best and cleanest abattoir in the Triple A category. The prestigious honor is given only to brands that are in the Hall of Fame, meaning hailed as best in its category for five times.

Consumers can trust that Monterey folks continue to think, maybe even stress, about how much more they can improve their system. If it sounds like the Monterey way borders on the obsessive, to us, meat-lovers, it can only mean one thing: always tasty, tender meats for the family.

Coffee: Next gold for Cordillera

Production still short of local demand

By Delmar Cariño
Inquirer Northern Luzon

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—The production of arabica coffee looms large as the Cordillera's next gold mine as millions of pesos of the variety's domestic and export demands remained partially tapped.

The Department of Agriculture has already identified coffee as the region's priority under its high value commercial crops program in a bid to expand areas of production and commercialize the marketing and distribution of local coffee.

The Cordillera is the top producer of coffee in the North-Central Luzon coffee cluster and arabica is the most commonly produced, the DA said.

But the 5,622 metric tons of coffee beans that the region produced last year from more than four million trees planted in more than 7,700 hectares of farms still fell short of supplying the local demand.

Officials of Nestle Philippines Inc., in a coffee investment forum in Baguio City in November, said the country consumes an average of 55,000 metric tons of coffee beans a year.

But they said the country only produces around 28,000 metric tons a year, forcing companies that produce coffee products to import the gap in production.

The business of coffee production though remained lucrative as arabica coffee alone continued to command a high price of P85 to P90 a kilogram, or a net income of P60,000 from a hectare, said the DA's agribusiness marketing assistance services (Amas).

Patricio Ananayo, Amas chief in the Cordillera, said more money could come in if all coffee beans needed by the country would be produced locally.

IGOROT coffee brews has started to draw attention, because the region remains one of the best resource for arabica beans.

EV ESPIRITU/ INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

Ananayo said Benguet and Mt. Province produce the best arabica coffee in the country but these provinces could only supply about 30 percent of the nationwide demand for the variety.

He said Barangay Banangan in Sablan town, Barangay Yagyagan in Tuba town, both in Benguet, and Sagada in Mt. Province are the areas that lead arabica production in the region.

"But most of the areas devoted to coffee are considered backyard production. We must expand production areas and link with corporate processors that control the market and the big cash," he said.

He said there are two corporate coffee producers in Benguet—the Araneta farms in Banangan, Sablan, with around 38 ha of coffee farms and the Ongpin farms in Tocmo, Itogon, which devoted half of its 70-ha property to coffee production.

Despite the shortage in production, Benguet and Mt. Province remained as the country's arabica capital, Ananayo said.

Robusta, another coffee variety, is also produced in the region. But Ananayo said the variety, together with liberica and excelsia varieties, are best produced in the lowlands.

"Coffee experts had raved about Benguet arabica's unique taste and aroma," he said.

He said that the variety's distinctive taste and robust growth could be attributed to the region's temperate climate.

The DA said plans are afoot to target an additional 5,000 ha of coffee plantations a year for the next five years.

This would entail the production of 25 million arabica seedlings to be planted in 25,109 ha of coffee farms in the region.

Ananayo said the market potentials of coffee grew over the years after the widely perceived negative effects of coffee, like high blood pressure, were proven false.

Today, he said, coffee is enjoyed not only as a beverage but as flavoring for cakes, ice cream, candies and pastries.

"If coffee is blended from pure arabica, it could cost P90 a cup like those sold in known commercial coffee shops," Ananayo said.

He said four arabica coffee beans are enough to be grounded into a cup of coffee that could be sold at P70 a cup.

CARLO and Kaye Garcia

How a pair . . .

From page B4

She was disappointed to find the usual beige, black and white bra and panty sets, the shape and design of which hardly changed since her mother's time.

Kaye decided to make the modern, colorful, trendy underwear with just the right fit that she was looking for herself, and the seeds of Hot Pink Lingerie were planted in 2003.

"We chose Hot Pink because the color represents our brand, which is feminine but a little gutsy and playful," Kaye explains, "it's not your sweet, baby pink type."

Vision to reality

Carlo and Kaye did everything themselves to transform Hot Pink from vision to reality. Kaye made use of her talent in design and passion for lingerie and sleepwear customized for the Asian fit, while 26-year-old Carlo took care of finance and operations.

They took out a loan from Carlo's father to add to their savings and used the money to buy the materials, such as lace and pure cotton fabric, from Hong Kong and to finance the design and production of the first pairs of Hot Pink lingerie.

"I remember buying rolls and rolls of fabric in Hong Kong even if we did not really know what to do with them yet. All I knew was that I was going to use them in my designs," Kaye says.

They also had no idea where and how to have the lingerie manufactured, but by asking friends of friends and asking for advice from colleagues of their parents who were in business themselves, they were able to find a manufacturer after many unsuccessful attempts.

"Many turned us down because we only wanted a few pieces per design, and we were just starting, we did not know anybody," Garcia says.

A few agreed to their terms, however, and the first line of products rolled out of the production floor in 2004 after about a year of struggling with the not-so-glamorous details of running a business, such as registration and getting the permits and clearances.

It has been two years since the first pairs of underwear with the Hot Pink brand and Carlo and Kaye now have their Hot Pink store at the Rockwell Power Plant Mall, and they also consign products at Rustan's department stores.

Hot Pink sells only a few pairs of a certain style, and each brassiere and panties is designed based on the smaller frames of Asians. The most saleable size is 34B.

Kaye explains that Asians—even the overweight ones—have smaller rib cages and cup sizes compared to their caucasian counterparts.

Asians also have smaller builds, so the sizes of panties are also generally smaller than those found in the west.

As for colors, there are the requisite black, beige and white, but there are also hot pinks, greys, blues, and a whole host of prints on lace, cotton and elastic material.

Lessons learned

Kaye admits that it has been a constant struggle to keep up with the demands of running a successful business and valuable and sometimes expensive lessons have been learned over the past two years.

One mistake was renting space at the mall that turned out to be too big for its operations.

Hot Pink downsized from 76 square meters to 30 sq.m., yet sales have remained the same and even growing.

Kaye adds that it was not wise to sell products without first looking at what the market wanted. What sells well abroad will not necessarily sell as well in the Philippines.

"We used to have those lingerie gowns that looked so good in the US. Very few bought them here," she says.

Hot Pink buyers preferred the camisoles, boy shorts and the cotton sleepwear. Lace underwear was also a big hit because they kept their shape and not irritating on the skin.

Keeping up

Kaye goes abroad to check the latest trends and to scout for new material.

One of Hot Pink's latest innovations is the K-bra, which "remembers" the shape of a woman's breast, to give adequate support and enhance breast size.

When they were starting the couple also had to contend with quality control problems.

"The labeling was all wrong. The size tags were on the wrong items and there were also stitching problems," Kaye says.

All these problems are all behind them now. Kaye and Carlo are now looking to expand their business through franchising, but with enough time left over for them to take care of their 7- and 1-year-old boys.

"When we grow Hot Pink to a certain point, maybe we can look forward to another child," Kaye says with a grin.

Ensure RP's future, adopt a school

YOUNG JASMINE'S EYES glowed as her uncle handed her a slightly used illustrated encyclopedia as a gift for her seventh birthday. She has always been amazed with things that could help her realize her ultimate dream of becoming a teacher someday. But Jasmine's dream, for the meantime, would remain a dream. She cannot be a teacher without tasting the fruits of quality education.

Jasmine Reyes, a girl studying in one of the metro's public schools, is just one of those who suffer from the sad reality that Filipino children are not given the kind of education they need to be productive in the future. Currently in the first grade, she is aware of the unfavorable state of her schooling. "It's hard to concentrate on what our teacher is explaining when, from time to time, I am bothered by my squeaking chair that I fear of suddenly falling from it," she lamented. "I also experience sharing books just to cope up with the day's lessons."

Many others trip over the wire attached to the fate that of Jasmine's—dreaming to rise as forthcoming achievers but falling short due to the instability of Philippine education: the limited learning resources from armchairs to textbooks, the absence of trained teachers, the imbalance of government funding and student population growth, and some other pressing matters.

As education is viewed not just as a saving grace for a brighter future for the young but also as a primary national concern, the Department of Education (DepEd) is in full force in pushing for Adopt-A-School, a program created to hopefully alleviate the adversity in the current educational scenario.

Investing in the future

The Adopt-A-School program opens opportunities for private individuals and institutions to take part in solving the education crisis by improving the quality of Philippine education. They are urged to become partners who shall provide assistance, short-term or long-term basis, to various concerns in public education.

According to DepEd Secretary Jesli Lapus, the education crisis, which has plagued the country for years, needs to be attended with a concerted effort, citing the private sector as a vital player. "I can only emphasize the need for our stakeholders to defeat this education crisis," he said.

"We call on our friends in the private sector and ask them to be counted in this partnership for education. We are all stakeholders in the nation's development. And education remains as our most vital social concern," Lapus added.

Instituted through the passage of Republic Act No. 8525 which was sponsored by Rep. Anne Marie Periquet in the House and by the late Sen. Marcelo Fernan and Sen. Juan Flavier in the Senate, the program was created to address the persistent problems of public education. It aims to create a multi-partnership for education, and more importantly, hopes to summon support, particularly funding, from private entities to direct Philippine public schools to modernization.

"We must also look at the danger of not being able to meet the high standards that are strictly prescribed by this age of technology and information. Our capacity to prosper and our propensity to falter or fail depend so much on our ability to educate our people, especially the young, so that they can keep pace with others in the highly competitive global stage," Lapus commented.

Further, the program also targets to provide conducive learning surroundings for all students, increase the achievement levels of the learners, broaden the access to quality education, and reduce dropout rates.

Since its launch in 2000, the program has shown impressive signs of progress. Presently, 22,000 public schools have been benefited by the contributions of more than 300 Adopt-A-School donors that equate to over P2.4 billion.

Among the stalwart partners of the program, who showed solid support by introducing their own educational projects, are Ayala Foundation (Gearing Up for Internet Literacy and Access Project), ABS-CBN Foundation (ETV).

Ways to help

There are many ways by which private entities can help achieve the needed upgrade of the education system through the Adopt-A-School program. The program consolidates a number of packages in which the donors can choose from. Generally, these packages are categorized into two: the program support packages and the stand-alone packages.

The program support packages are further classified into four: Early Reading Skills Package, Basic Education Completion Package, Multi-grade/Multi-age Package, and School System Conversion Package.

The first two packages are created to assure that the students are exposed to the fundamentals of studying; the Early Reading Skills Package enhances the reading capabilities of students while the Basic Education Completion Program gives support to the students for ongoing learning opportunities. Inclusive programs on reading such as supplying reading materials (i.e. textbooks, workbooks, story books, learning kits, etc.) and building local libraries and education assistance programs like feeding programs are incorporated in the two packages.

The Multi-grade/Multi-age Package serves as the best mode to deliver learning to pupils in thinly populated schools by merging classes of two or more grade levels under the supervision of one teacher.

As a way to return the efforts of the donors, they are entitled to over 150 percent allowable tax deduction. According to the program's website (www.adopt-a-school.ph), the adopting private entities can obtain such incentive by requesting an endorsement from the DepEd central office through the Adopt-A-School secretariat.

Real estate globalization to benefit all biz sectors

THE ONGOING GLOBALIZATION OF THE world's real estate industry is expected to benefit all business sectors, particularly those in the Philippines and the rest of tropical Asia, at a phenomenal scale.

This assessment and projection made up the principal basis of US-based event organizer Expo and Convention Promotion Inc. (ECPI) in branching out to the Philippines and choosing Manila as venue for its 1st Asian International Real Estate Expo and Conference (AIREEC).

ECPI-Manila representative Dan Garcia said AIREEC would soon showcase this welcome reality that had begun to surface with Koreans, Japanese and other nationalities now owning houses in the Philippines as their second homes.

"The world's huge market for second homes is making real estate borderless and so are its capital, technologies, investors, professionals, buyers, and project sites, etc. And the huge amount of money, products, expertise and people flowing across continents for real estate projects and property ownership are driving economies to great heights because this aspect of globalization poses no trade problem but only benefits, and the tropical Asia, especially the Philippines, enjoys a distinct advantage," Garcia said.

That so-called "Asian Advantage" will be featured in AIREEC, highlighting the immense benefits of real estate globalization to various sectors.

"At the same time, AIREEC will help participants establish global presence, build up image, open new markets, gain new partners, learn about competitors, widen network, initiate sales, and get a feel of the world's response to their products or services," Garcia explained.

AIREEC (www.aireec.com) will be staged at the Philippine International Convention Center and the World Trade Center on Dec. 6-10, 2007.

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Discussion Focal Points

1. Introduction
2. The internet technology, Philippine setting
   a. Background
   b. How can it be utilized for political campaign
   i. Campaign website versus political website
      1. Do's and Don'ts
      2. What to put in your website – how can internet bring in votes, volunteers and even donations for you
      3. Security features
      4. Domain names
      5. Web hosting
      6. Promoting your website
         a. How can you attract viewers/readers and make them come back again and again.
         b. How to integrate an on-line raffle system
   ii. E-mailing
      1. Dos and don'ts
      2. Mass e-mailing
      3. Creating a mailing list
   c. Costings
3. How to set up a call center for political campaign
   a. Basic principles of a call center
   b. Technology
      i. Taking advantage of SMS: How you can generate funds and promote your candidacy at the same time using SMS.
      ii. Software to reduce labor cost (make your computer work for you while you and your staff can do other things, or even while you are resting).
      iii. Taking advantage of VOIP
      iv. Creating leads (call list)
   c. Costings
4. The Omnibus Election Code: Do's and don'ts to avoid violation of the Omnibus Election Code.
5. Introduction of Halalan2007.ph
6. Comparison of campaign/advertisement methods (Print, TV, Radio, and the Halalan 2007 concept of using the internet and other IT solutions.

WHO MUST ATTEND?
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Sidra Rm., Cebu Waterfront Hotel
Lahug, Cebu City

Sunday BIZ

How a pair of sexy lingerie fulfilled a dream

Twentysomething creates line after failing to find trendy underwear in the country

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

KAYE GARCIA HAD NO idea that the pair of sexy Victoria's Secret lingerie that her husband gave her during a trip to the United States would inspire her to fulfill a lifelong dream to have her own business.

The 24-year-old mother of two tells the INQUIRER in an interview that she loved the look and feel of the sexy lingerie set so much that she immediately looked for more when she and her husband, Carlo, came back to Manila.

Her search led her to many dead ends.

HOW A PAIR/ B3

THE BRAND is feminine but a little gutsy and playful.

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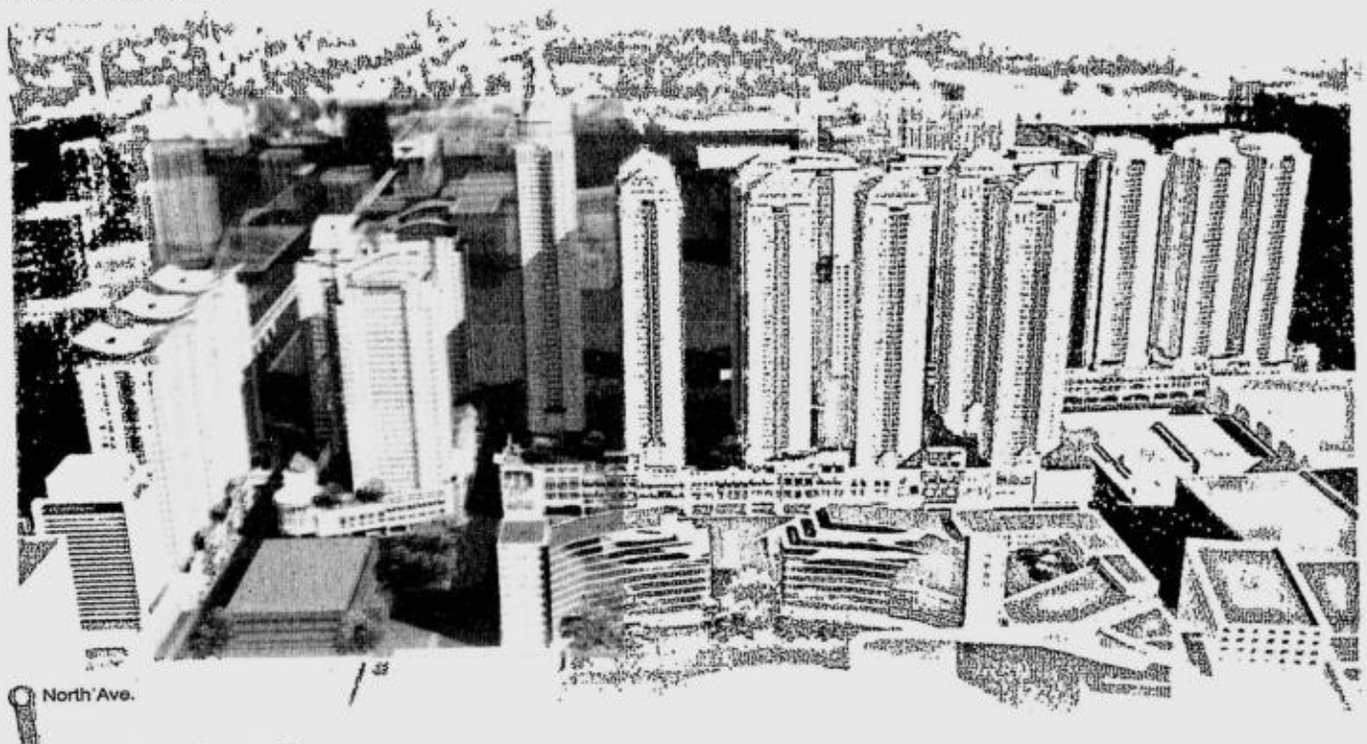
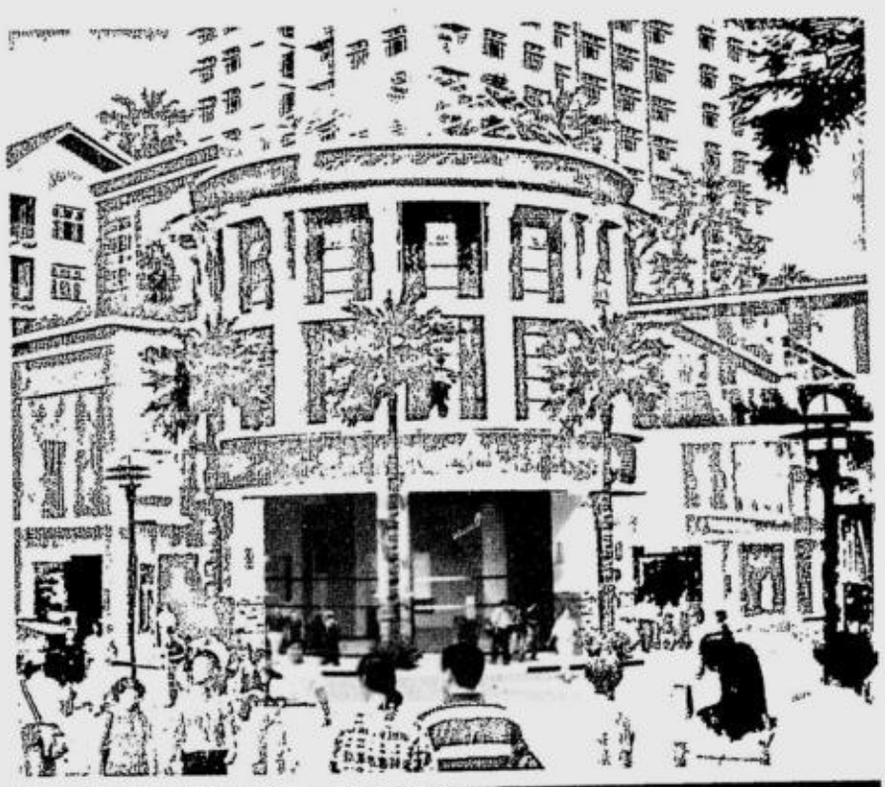
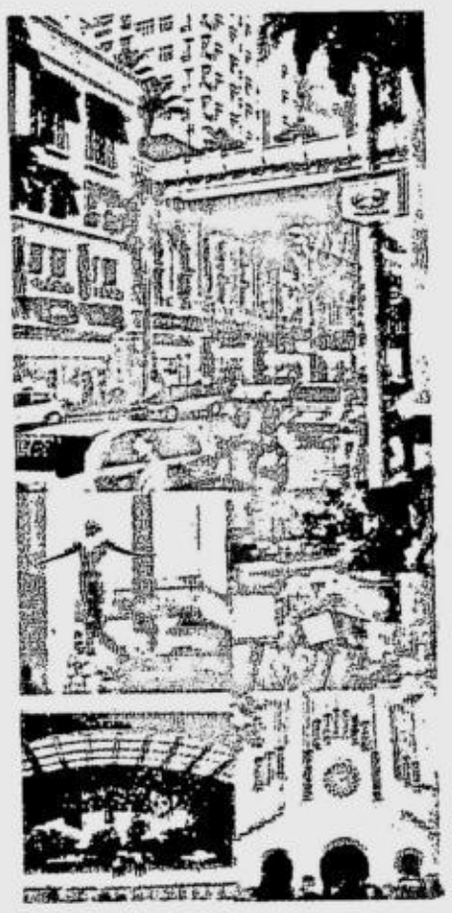


The Manhattan Garden City is the country's first transit-oriented development, linking you to not just one but two train systems: the LRT2 along Aurora Boulevard. And MRT3 along EDSA. So you're just a stroll away from a quick and traffic-free ride to virtually all major points of Metro Manila.

What's more, Manhattan Garden City connects you to the shops, offices, restaurants and entertainment centers at the Araneta Center. So you can live, shop, play and move like never before.



Easy ride around the metro.



A 729-meter-long footbridge standing four stories above the streets interconnects all 20 residential towers of your community. And leads you straight to the LRT2 and MRT3. There are lush greenery and benches. So going to the train stations is as enjoyable as a walk in the park.

With the trains close by, the power to go places is yours. Your children can be in Ateneo or UP in Quezon City in just 8 minutes via the LRT2. Or Manila's university belt in 19 minutes.

Your wife can get to Divisoria's bargain stores in 29 minutes. While you can be in your office in Ortigas in 6 minutes, Ayala Avenue in 17 minutes or Taft Avenue in 22 minutes through the MRT3. And since both lines link up with the LRT1, you can reach many more places in the metro than ever before.

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Easy link to the Araneta Center.

Manhattan Garden City enjoys direct access to the giant playground that's the Araneta Center. Your entry point is a **four-level transfer station** with a hotel-style lobby, grand staircase and four passenger elevators. The station connects you at the third level to the Gateway Mall and its Oasis floating garden. From there, you're just steps away from Rustan's, SM, Shopwise, Ali Mall, Farmers Plaza and the iconic Araneta Coliseum.

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Sunday LIFESTYLE

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso
(Smart) or email us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

Cebu puts her best foot forward

All eyes are on the Queen City of the South as it hosts the Asean summit

ALL EYES WILL BE ON CEBU FOR THE next couple of weeks. The focus will not be on its spectacular beach resorts, like the Shangri-La's Mactan Island Resort & Spa, or its internationally acclaimed exporters, like design luminary **Kenneth Cobonpue**, or even its award-winning artists, like Prince of Faux Bling **Butch Carungay**. Instead, everyone's eyes will be on Cebu as the venue for the much awaited, weather-interrupted, and finally-here Asean Summit.

The island is more than prepared. After months of intense beautification projects, including electrification of almost all the roads, hyper-speed construction especially of the impressive Cebu Convention Center and even building private access roads to and from the Shang Mactan Resort, Cebu is ready for its world premiere.

TESSA!

Tessa Prieto Valdes

The new Ocean Wing of Shang Mactan, with each room having a private balcony offering a sweeping view of the Visayan Sea and the outlying islands, has been completely refurbished with chic resort interiors and state-of-the-art amenities. The Ocean Wing has its own private lobby reception that directly caters to its guests without passing the hotel's main lobby.

Swell 'ninang'

Over the holidays, I flew to Cebu for the wedding of a young, happy couple, Dr. **Erwyn Ong** and **Maribel Gaisano Ang**. Several months ago, Metro Gaisano's amiable and lovable dragon lady, **Margaret Gaisano Ang**, asked me to be *ninang* at her daughter's wedding. This is what I call both an honor and a horror. It seems I have now been elevated to *ninang* status at weddings. Am I no longer of cord-sponsor age? Horrors!

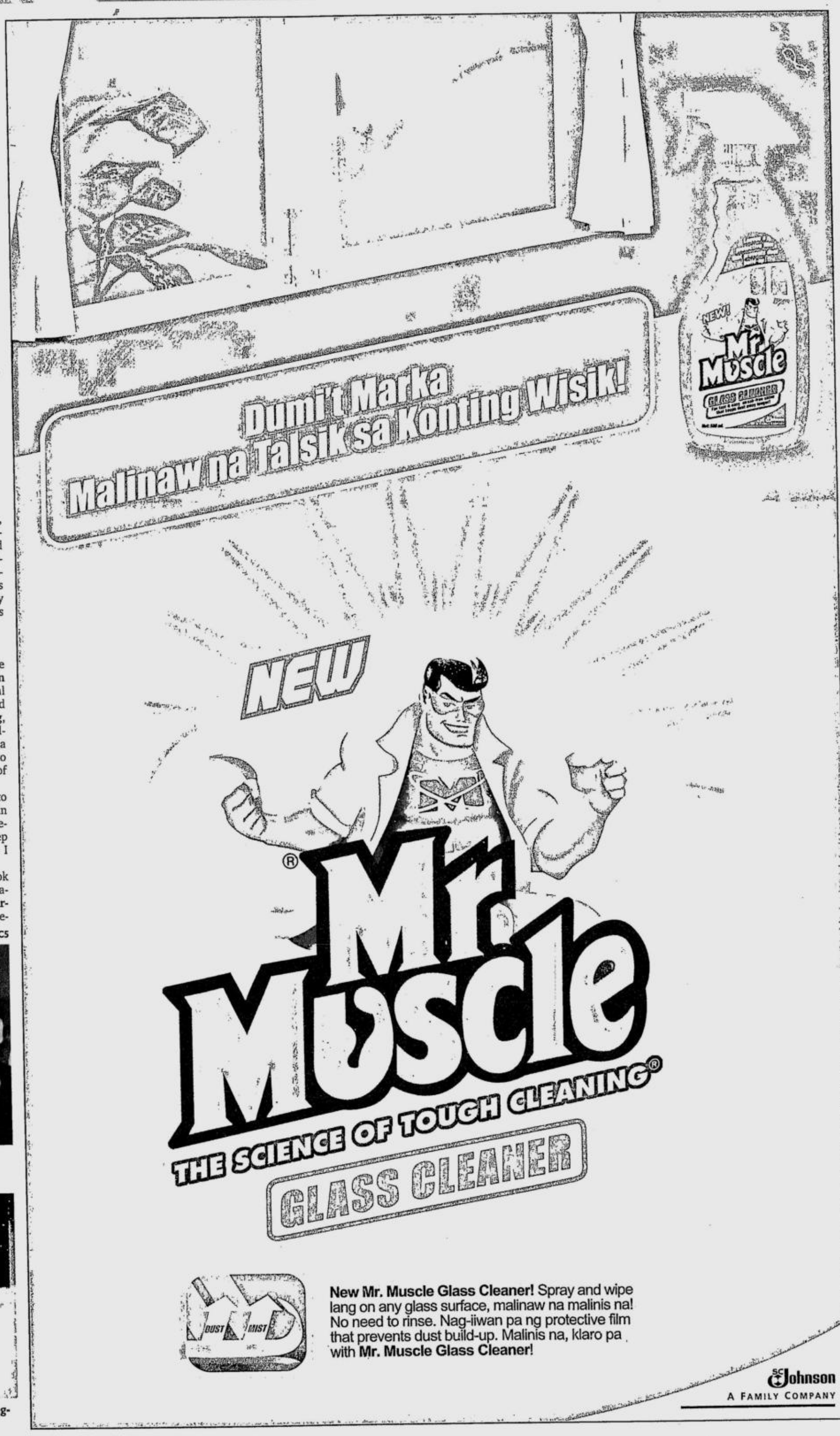
As befitting a principal sponsor, I had to have a regal-looking (i.e., matronly) gown in the right color scheme and with equally elegant (i.e., also matronly) jewelry. One sweep through my wardrobe and accessories and I knew I didn't have either of those items.

So I decided to do a stylized *ninang* look with the help of Cebu's newest fashion sensation, **Cary Santiago**, and accessory giant **Arnel Papa**. Cary just arrived back in his home-

CEBU/ C5

LUCY Torres Gomez and Cebu fashion designer Cary Santiago

TALL and lovely bride Maribel Gaisano Ang-Ong with her designer Philip Rodriguez



EMILY'S POST
Emily Marcelo

Shattered dream of a Korean's bride

DEAR EMILY,

I married a Korean and we're living in Korea. I thought my life was going to improve abroad. I always had hopes of working overseas to help my poor family in the Philippines.

Our marriage was all right at first. But I noticed that my husband's mood swings got worse as months went by.

I found out later that he was really mentally unstable and needed psychiatric treatment. Now I am the one who has to earn a living to support him. I am scared for myself because he can be violent without provocation. I cry everyday!

I want to get out of this place and leave this horrible marriage. I am very tired and really desperate. I have nobody to turn to.

CARRIE

Clearly, this is not the time to wag a finger at you and scold you for marrying someone for business purposes. But, really, what were you thinking? And your parents allowed you to do this?

Do you know how difficult it is to enter a marriage despite a long engagement? How much more to someone you hardly know or even love? That's like scaling a mountain using your fingernails—with a sack of rice tied to your back!

Since this marriage started out as a business venture, theoretically you can always quit your "employment" anytime you get disabled or lose interest in it. There's no use staying on because, for all intents and purposes, this marriage was really a big, shameful sham to begin with!

Whoever pushed you into this relationship is sick, greedy and has absolutely no scruples. If there's nobody to blame but you—then amen to that. There's a saying "be careful about what you wish for... you just might get it!"

Your problem now is, even if your wedding was solemnized abroad, it will still be valid in the Philippines—unless you ask your husband to divorce you. Only then can you come home and start a new life.

Or, short of making him swim with the fishes, you can file for a petition of annulment of marriage.

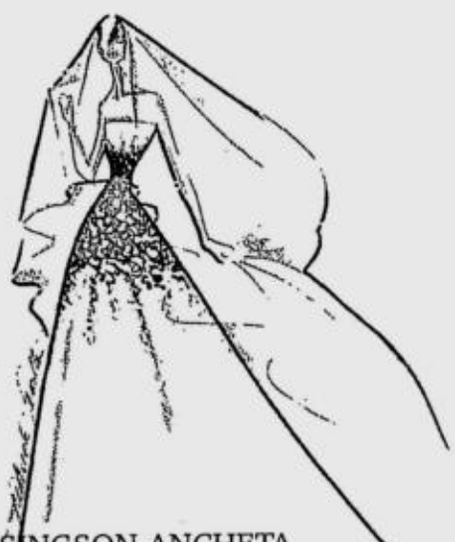
But consider yourself lucky to be living in this age of a very open, very forgiving and extremely tolerant society. You don't have any more reason to cry a river or bang your head against the wall the rest of your life for making this horrible mistake. You can even just chuck it all and come home if you have the money for a plane fare.

Learn your lesson well from this episode. Don't be seduced by tales from lands of milk and honey and visions of money growing on trees. Not all that glitters is gold. Some are coming from tears of desperate broken women—like you.

E-mail the author at emarcelo@inquirer.com.ph, Subject-Lifestyle or send your letters to INQUIRER. Listen to Ms Marcelo co-host the program "Kalikasan Vigilante," 7:15-8:30 p.m., Monday-Friday, on dwBR 104.3 FM.

Milestones

We welcome announcements of weddings and engagements. Submit names of engaged couple, names of parents, date and place of wedding, and gown designer along with a photo of the couple and a sketch of the bridal gown, if any, to the INQUIRER, P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City. E-mail to lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph. A photo of the bride and groom is required if the wedding has already taken place. Announcements will be printed depending on space availability and at no cost to the senders.



SINGSON-ANCHETA

Marito "Chi" Feir Singson and **Maureen Toledo Ancheta**, both of Gattaran, Cagayan, will wed Jan. 9 at Mount Carmel Shrine Parish Church, New Manila, QC. The groom is the eldest child of **Carlo** and **Josefina Singson**. The bride is the youngest child of **Bernardino** and **Luz Ancheta**. Reception will follow at The Oasis, Aurora Boulevard, San Juan.

The bride will wear a **Frederick Peralta** bouffant gown of duchess silk gazar with a detachable train and lace accents cascading on the bodice.

DE JESUS-VALTE

Toti de Jesus, son of lawyers **Clodualdo** and **Carolina de Jesus**, will wed **Elaine Valte**, daughter of **Romeo** and **Amelia Valte**, Jan. 17 at the Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati City. Reception will follow at the Quezon Ballroom, Makati Shangri-La Hotel.

Eric Pineda designed the bride's gown in ivory Italian satin.

DIZON-CRUZ

Gerald C. Dizon, son of engineer **Gerardo** and **Evangeline Dizon**, will wed **Jessica M. Cruz**, daughter of **José** and **Rita Cruz**, Jan. 20, 8 a.m., at San Agustin Church, Intramuros, Manila. Reception will follow at The Manila Hotel.

ZAFRANCO-OROSCO

Ferdinand Zafranco, son of **Rosauro** and **Eulalia Zafranco**, will wed Dr. **Cyd Charisse Orosco**, daughter of Dr. **Christopher** and **Elizabeth Orosco**, Jan. 8. Fr. **Eligio Cruz**, SDB, will officiate the ceremony at Nuestra Señora de Gracia Church, Guadalupe, Makati City. Reception will follow at Philippine Army Officers Clubhouse, Fort Bonifacio. **Emily Sy** of ESY Creations designed the bridal gown.

LEYNES-QUITON

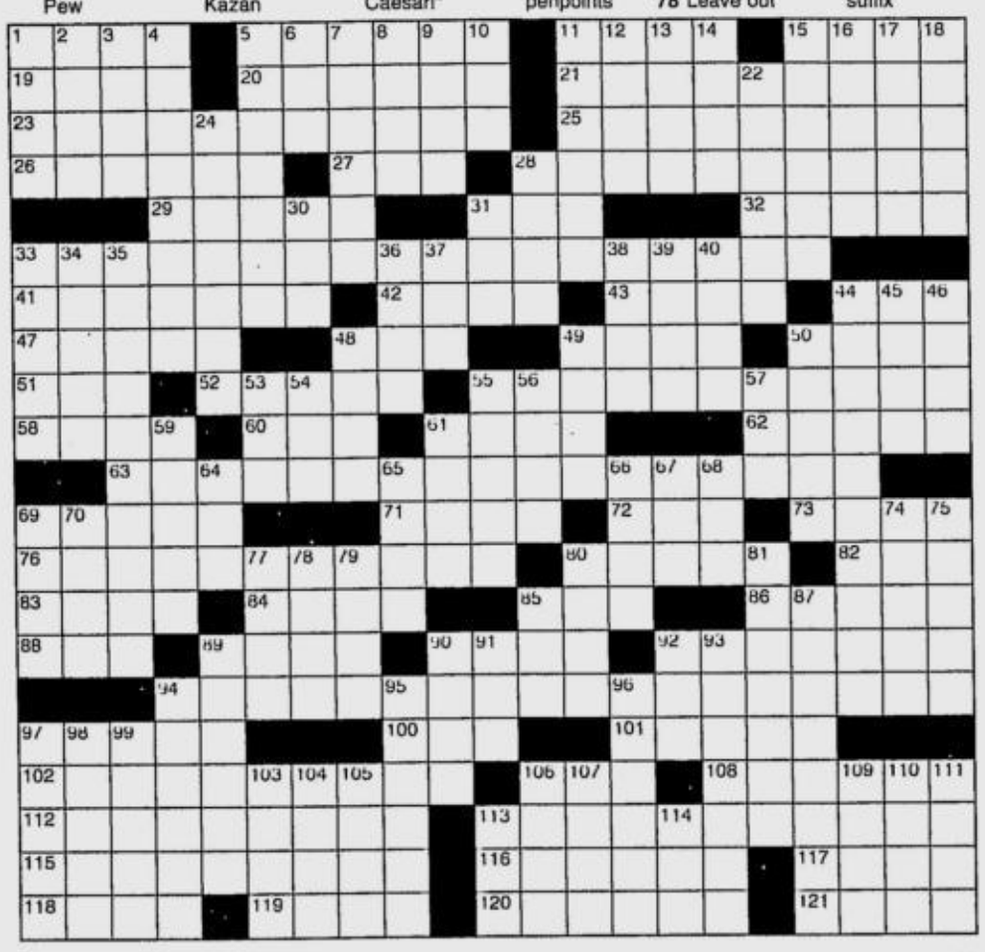
Emerson Leynes, son of Mr. and Ms **Rodrigo Leynes**, and **Joanne Ruth Quiton**, daughter of Mr. and Ms **Quintin Quiton**, will exchange vows Jan. 8, 10 a.m., at the San Sebastian Cathedral, Lipa City, Batangas. Reception will follow at El Grande Residencia Hotel & Resort.

SUNDAY CROSSWORD

PREMIER CROSSWORD/ By Frank A. Longo — **CAT PEOPLE**

ACROSS
1 Actor Reiser
5 Lurch
11 Santa — (hot desert winds)
15 Conn of "Grease"
19 "Born Free" lion
20 Take too far
21 Places to convalesce
23 "Platoon" co-star
25 Underlying reason
26 Album
27 Ending for ball or bass
28 "The Odd Couple" neatnik
29 Aristide's country
31 Chunk of time
32 Pee Wee or Della
33 Slain president
41 Glossy paints
42 Pillage
43 One of the deadly sins
44 He's a doll
47 Wino
48 Bullring call
49 Safe, at sea
50 Skunk Le Pew
51 U.S. immigrants' class
52 Lost dog
55 1948-53 Met conductor
58 Not hidden
60 "— Miss Brooks"
61 "Benny & —" (1993 romance)
62 Fixed a chair
63 "F.I.S.T." star
69 Pens and needles
71 Tallies
72 "— pasa?"
73 It may follow "ye"
76 Oscar-winning documentary director
80 Sledded down an icy chute
82 Orgs.
83 Grammar class topic
84 Radio jock Don
85 — good job
86 Brilliance of success
88 See 38-Down
89 Court order
90 Filmdom's Kazan
92 Tiny biological building block
94 "The Cosby Show" father
97 Light gun?
100 Feedbag bit
101 Hate
102 Lorenzo Lamas' mom
106 Seed holder
108 Libyan's language
112 Business identifier
113 "Wild West" showman
115 Hang fluttering atop
116 Successfully vaccinated
117 Mishmash
118 Pitcher
119 Auld lang —
120 Unfurled
121 Lawn eyesore

DOWN
1 Tennis star Korda
2 Soothing plant
3 "Gomer Pyle, —"
4 Puccini opera
5 Friendly
6 "Hail, Caesar!"
7 Friend of Monet
8 Hence
9 Blissful spot
10 Hide-hair linkup
11 Unpaid debt
12 Patricia of "Hud"
13 — Spumante (wine)
14 Pixy — (powdered candy)
15 Dressed up in
16 Reflection
17 Editorial strike-outs
18 French river
22 Every 60 minutes
24 Pencil parts
28 Sig Ep, e.g.
30 Atlanta-based station
31 Self-image
33 Ballet jumps
34 Win by —
35 Aunt Jemima product
36 Political friend
37 Curly's pal
38 With 88-Across, feature of some penpoints
39 Don Juan's mother
40 At any point
44 Dog breeders' association
45 Sword type
46 Square sort
48 Paddles
49 "— it grand?"
50 Grand or spinet
53 "Mazel —!"
54 Regret bitterly
55 Edsels, e.g.
56 Flag sewer
57 Prefix with tourist
59 Hose stuff
61 Yoda, e.g.
64 — Abner
65 Fills with black gunk
66 Blue shade
67 Schlep
68 Ang of films
69 In the mail
70 "U.S.S. Enterprise" counselor Deanna
74 "If I had it to — over again ..."
75 Lauder of cosmetics
77 Actress Sorvino
78 Leave out
79 Buzzi of "Laugh-In"
80 Bread unit
81 Actor Benicio —
85 "What's the —?"
87 The "It" girl
89 Actor Klemperer
90 Tel Aviv airline
91 Put a match to
92 Little lion
93 Emitted a breath
94 Mindful one
95 Stick together
96 Enjoyed the festivities
97 Shaping tool
98 Bow's partner
99 Toll away
103 Baseballer Slaughter
104 Crockett of folklore
105 Church cry
106 Shoe type
107 "How silly —!"
109 Ill temper
110 "Would — to you?"
111 Oaf
113 Prefix with electricity
114 Chemical suffix



answer on page C5

Faire celebrates Sto. Niño fiesta

PURELY PERSONAL
Josephine Darang

I WAS SURPRISED WHEN CELY Ugaddan Romero told me that her great-grandfather, Manuel Fayre, founded the Cagayan town Faire in 1897.

Now called Sto. Niño (though old folks still call it Faire), it marks its fiesta on Jan. 16. In Ed de Rivera Castillet's book "Cagayan and Her People," the town is described as a beautiful, prosperous land.

Travel by bus or car from Tuguegarao takes 45 minutes. The present parish priest, Fr. Nathaniel Malana, is working with Rogelio Ugaddan, Cely's brother, in preparing for a memorable fiesta celebration.

They have received encouragement from Archbishop Diosdado Talamayan, Cagayan Gov. Edgar Lara and Faire Mayor Vicente Pagurayan.

Cely said, for the first time there would be a "Sagat Festival" featuring furniture and home accessories made of molave. *Balikbayans* were taken on a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Piat and a tour of the ruins of St. Agnes Church in Tabang. For details, please text 0915-5616039.

Those who want their names included in the souvenir program can write to Marita Cardona at Parish of Santo Niño de Faire, Sto. Niño, Cagayan, or text the above cell phone number.

History

Manuel Fayre migrated from Dingras, Ilocos Norte, and settled in Cordoba town. He married Felicitas Pagulayan, sister of Capt. Ubaldo Pagulayan. Manuel had a son—the only one—out of wedlock named Jacinto. His mother, surnamed Rosquetta, was said to be the fairest in the town.

Jacinto married Gelacia Palejo and had four children: Pastora who married Pedro Ugaddan; Epifania, Patricia and Asuncion.

The Ugaddan's children are Eduardo; Enrique, who looks like Manuel Fayre; Jacinto; Rosario; Rogelio; and Basilisa or Cely, who married Chando Romero of Catarman, Samar.

Manuel encouraged people from Dingras, Piddig and Laoag in Ilocos Norte to come to Faire via Palapot. He was a generous patron who distributed land to the settlers.

Now a widow, Cely is working on a doctorate on special education and teaches at the University of Perpetual Help in Las Piñas. She wants to share her heritage with other Cagayanos in Metro Manila. Having been born in a historic town, she wants to record the stories of Faire.

First priest

Fr. Antonio Gacula Pintucan, current parish priest of San Isidro Labrador Church in Lasam town, grew up very poor in Faire. For his school expenses, he cut sugarcane in the fields to earn a little money.

Antonio finished his philosophy studies at the Aparri seminary then received a scholarship from Opus Dei to study theology in Rome and was eventually ordained a deacon.

In 1996, Archbishop Talamayan ordained him a priest in the old church of Sto. Niño attended by the whole town, including his mother Emiliana Gacula Pintucan and relatives.

Help needed

The parishioners of St. Joseph the Worker in Echague, Isabela, are raising funds for the construction of their church. Leading the campaign are various organizations, including the Catholic Women's League and the Knights of Columbus.

CWL president Ana Benita Gumpal Balauag, aunt of my dear friend and colleague Jojo G. Silvestre, said they needed P11 million. Construction of some parts has started, but so much remains to be done.

She said they wanted to have the altar ready by March 19, feast of St. Joseph the Worker. They need funds to put up six colored cut-glass panels representing important phases in the life of their patron saint, including the Nativity.

Total cost of the panels is P970,000. She is trying to raise the money from townmates living in the city. The whole altar, including the sacristy, will cost P2.9 million.

Another group is focusing its efforts on professionals living abroad. Parishioners like lawyer Ruben Lopez and Dr. Virginia Babaran are actively in touch with Echagueños abroad who send checks or present their contributions when they visit.

Echague Mayor Leoncio Kiat, including barangay councils through their chairs, has been very supportive.

Everyone in the parish is also helping. Many pledged P100 a month for 24 months, while others donated materials like cement, hollow blocks and steel bars.

Parish priest Fr. Patrick Henry B. Pua and his assistant, Fr. Dante Masso, have given moral support. Bishop Sergio Utleg, who will become bishop of the Laoag diocese from Jan. 11, also helped when he was still in Echague. Those who wish to help can make checks payable to St. Joseph the Worker Parish and send to Fr. Henry Pua in Echague, Isabela, or text 0918-3558195.

Singer needs help

Rico Javier del Rosario is 29 years old, good-looking, sings very well but is blind. He performs at the Island Cove in Cavite. Jun Cayabyab, brother of Ryan Cayabyab, saw his potential and taught Rico how to play the piano and keyboard. Rico accompanies himself when he sings.

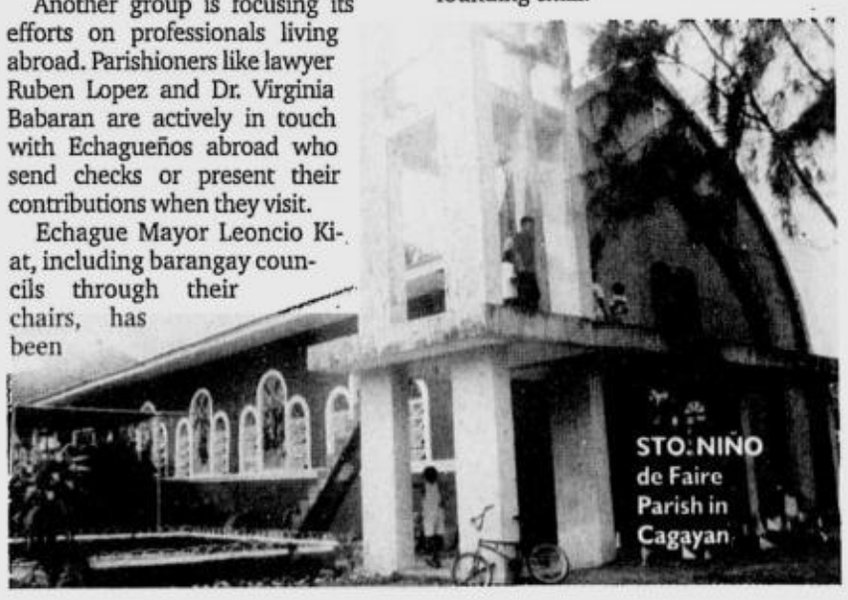
He was born blind. Afraid he could lose his job as singer, he took lessons in reflexology. He supports his family—he and his wife have one son and another baby on the way—by singing and doing reflexology.

Rico accepts jobs to sing in wedding receptions or parties.

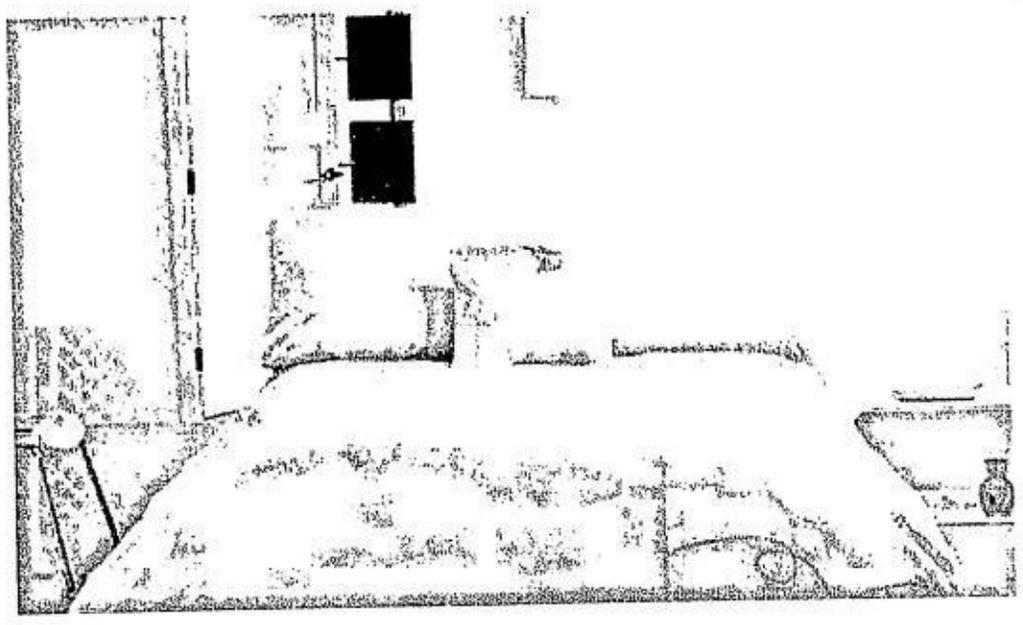
Let us help him. Please text 0928-7848433. His wife Jennifer Ramirez will answer.

Exhibit

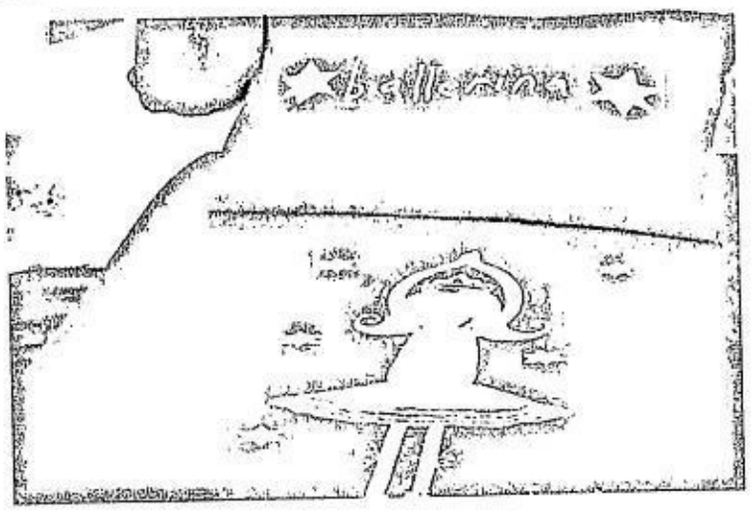
The Congregacion del Santissimo Nombre del Niño Jesus will hold its yearly exhibit Jan. 18-28 at the PNB Financial Center. Registration is 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Jan. 15-17. Fiesta committee chair is Jesse Nell while Chito Ilagan is co-chair. Ricky Miranda is president, Jing Chua board chair and Ben Farrales founding chair.



Luxury in your bedroom



MARGARET Muir Scribble design bed linen



BALLERINA duvet cover with two pillow cases; fitted sheet with two pillow cases; pillow cases

BRITISH designer Margaret Muir develops and creates bed linens in a wide variety of designs, textiles and colors. Hues vary from natural cream and white backgrounds to pastels and brighter, deeper shades.

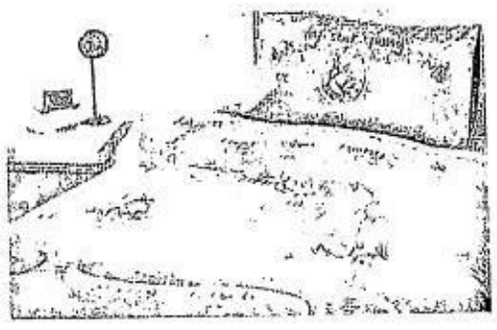
Her collection is now available at Robinsons Department Store (RDS). Included in the line are duvet covers from 100-percent pure cotton percale. The embroideries feature intricate details with the highest standard of workmanship.

The various designs are intended to meet everyone's preferences. Mothers will probably appreciate the white Modern Lace and Maple Red linens. Men might go for Scribble and Spiral, or the geometric pattern of the Ring.

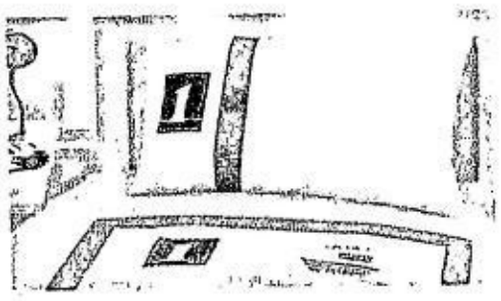
Girls may like the Gypsy Flower Taupe design or Ballerina print while boys might go for Pony or numeric 123 designs.

Muir's world-class linen collection is available exclusively in select RDS branches.

Check out Margaret Muir collections at Robinsons Galleria, Robinsons Place Manila, Robinsons Place Dasmariñas, Robinsons Place Lipa, Robinsons Place Bacolod, Robinsons Metro East and Festival Mall Alabang. Visit the website at www.rds.com.ph.



PONY Club design



ALSO from the Muir collection: 123 design

Horticulture show opens Feb. 2

THE PHILIPPINE HORTICULTURAL SOCIety Inc. (PHSI) will hold its annual garden show Feb. 3-12 at the Manila Seedling Bank Environmental Center (MSBEC), Edsa corner Quezon Avenue, QC. Formal opening will be on Feb. 2, 4 p.m., at Greenhouse 2.

This year's show, Horticulture 2007: Asian Gardens on The Horticulture 07' Show, coincides with the 30th anniversary of the Manila Seedling Bank Foundation (MSBF).

Guests of honor are Bienvenido R. Tantoco, former president of Rustan's Group of Companies; and Romeo V. Jacinto, first general manager of MSBEC.

This year, the show will focus on different Asian landscaping styles.

Overall show chair is Anthony Arbias assisted by George Yao. Committee chairs are Fernando Aurigue, judging and awards; Willie Marbella and Wendy Regalado, arts, designs and documentations; May Dumlao and Nora Padua, reception and program; Chat Alejandro and Fely Gupit, publicity and public relations; Kathy King and Elsa Pondevida, commercials, tickets, secretariat; Jimmy Floro, physical arrangement.

Exhibitors include Serapion Metilla, Vic Chin and Rap Eugenio, King Louie's Plants and Flowers, Philippine Orchid Society, University of the Philippines' Landscape Architecture Group, Natural Stone Society of the Philippines, Philippines Bonsai Society, Pinoy Aquatics, Flower Club of the Philippines, Herpetological Society of the Philippines, Haribon Foundation, Cactus and Succulent Society of the Philippines, Alejandro and the Philippine Postal Museum and Library.

Lectures will be conducted Feb. 3-11. Call 4267581 for schedule.

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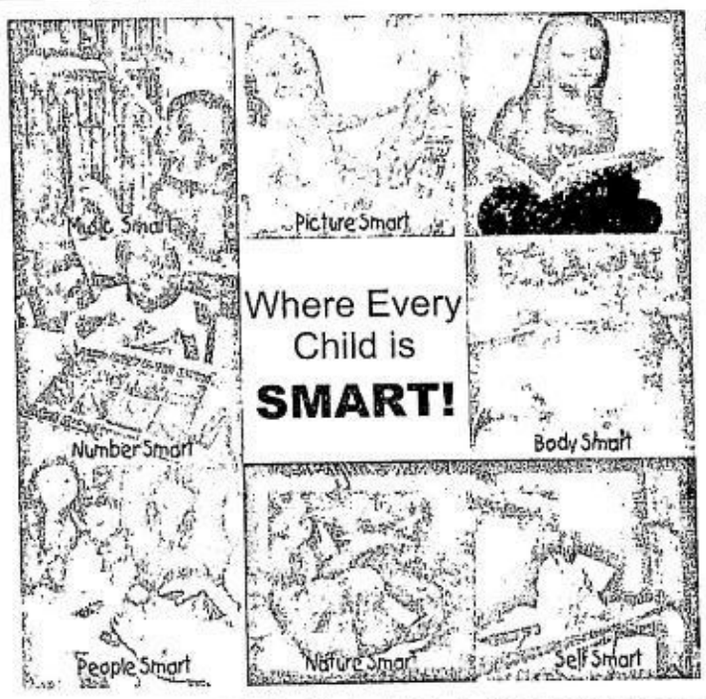

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Sunday LIFESTYLE Travel

Travel gets 'feminized'

30 years ago, only about 10 women traveled compared to 90 men. Today the number has almost evened up globally—60 men to 40 women

FROM left: MasterCard's Judith Dayrit, Ma. Rosario Santos, Arlene Joyce Lina, MasterCard's Georgette Tan, U21 Global's Dr. Michael Goldberg, Lorena Valerio, Marileen Ayson, Josielyn Manabat, Ma. Renita Cañafranca and Sunshine Lou San Luis

By Linda B. Bolido

WITH SO MANY WOMEN ALready in the travel and tourism industry, it would seem unnecessary to give them an additional boost.

But MasterCard Worldwide felt otherwise. The credit card company decided that, despite the strides women had made and though many of them already felt they were holding managerial positions, they still needed all the help they could get.

Georgette Tan Adamopoulos, vice president for communications, said, "Women who decided to make (travel and tourism their) career needed (advance) education to better themselves."

Thus, the annual MasterCard Worldwide U21Global Scholarship for Women in Travel and Tourism in Asia/Pacific was born. The program will let beneficiaries earn the U21 Global Diploma in Tourism and Travel Management without leaving their posts.

Dr. Michael Goldberg, chief academic officer of U21Global, said the online program was developed because the sponsors realized it would be "difficult to educate (the grantees) because they travel and are scattered in a wide area."

Tan said, by helping women strengthen their skills and enhance their performance in the industry, MasterCard stood to benefit because travelers were among the major users of their product. Moreover, women now constitute a major travel/tourism market.

She noted that some 30 years ago, only about 10 women traveled compared to 90 men. Today the number has almost evened up globally—60 men to 40 women. "In the West," Tan said, "it is already 50-50."

Women, she said, traveled not just for leisure but for business, too, as more and more females entered the corporate world. "And they are very serious about their travel. They really plan (their itineraries)." Tan added that, contrary to the stereotype, "they (women) are not just into shopping but also cultural and other pursuits."

Many older women, persons with disposable, discretionary income were traveling, as well. Tan said the industry was not just seeing women traveling together but the latest trend seemed to be three-generational groups—mother, daughter and grandmother.

"With more women traveling, who better to understand them than other women? As more women travel, they will need women to understand their specific, special needs," Tan pointed out.

As for those who joined the industry, she said women seemed to find travel and tourism a natural fit as a career probably because of their nurturing side. The industry, she said, was all about warmth and nurturing, qualities associated with women.

With the scholarship, MasterCard and U21Global hoped to enable women in the industry to contribute more to improve the industry to meet the challenges of a changing market. Goldberg said the program would help raise even more the number of women in management positions in the travel/tourism industry.

Tan and Goldberg were in Manila recently to award the scholarships to Filipino recipients. The Philippines got seven full scholarships of the 20 grants available, the highest number for any market in the Asia/Pacific. Goldberg said one Singaporean winner was also a Filipino.

He added, "Applicants were clearly well beyond what we get in our graduate program." U21 Global is an online graduate school that is a joint venture between Universitas 21, an international network of 19 universities in 11 countries, and Thomson Learning, a leader in tailored learning solutions.

With the launch of the scholarship program, he said the partners, MasterCard and U21Global, hoped to create a community of graduates that would share and exchange information and skills to further improve the industry.

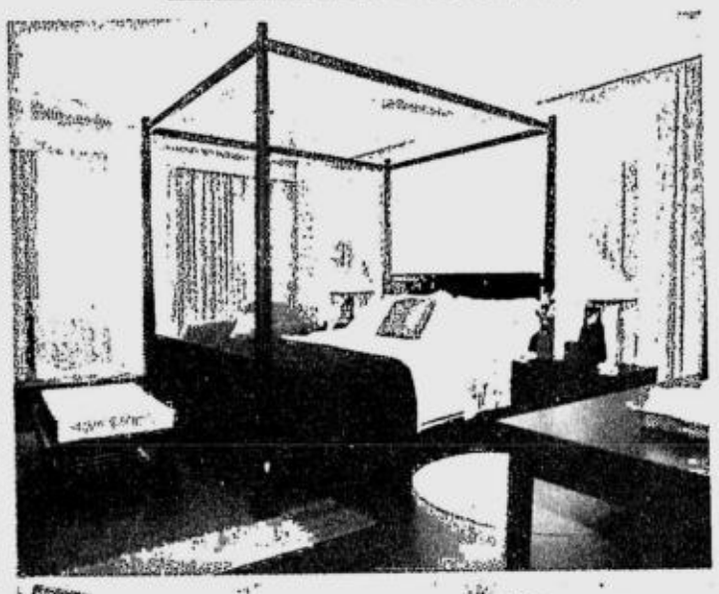
The first Filipino recipients of the MasterCard Worldwide U21Global Scholarship for Women were Ma. Rosario Santos, quality management representative, Cebu Pacific Air; Sunshine Lou San Luis, in-house sales executive, Cathay Pacific Airways; Arlene Joyce Lina, marketing and public relations manager, El Nido Resorts; Ma. Renita Cañafranca, resident manager, El Nido; Lorena Valerio, sales and marketing manager, La Corona Group of Hotels; Anna Angeline Cataluña, passenger sales executive, Cathay Pacific; and Lourdes Yalung, executive management manager, NexC.

Partial scholarships were granted to runner-up Marilen Ayson, direct sales supervisor, El Nido; and honorable mention Josielyn Manabat, direct sales and reservations manager, El Nido.

Cañafranca, in accepting the award, said the online program "was a perfect arrangement" since she could study while doing her job at El Nido. Other programs would have meant her quitting her job.

Santos said, because she would be studying while working, she would be able to apply immediately to her work lessons she would learn from the program.

TRAVEL BRIEFS



NEW CAVITE RESORT
Mount Sea Grand Resort is the new travel destination in Capipisa, Tanza, Cavite. Built on two hectares of property, the hotel has 124 guest rooms. The hotel features the Yang-tze, which serves authentic Chinese food; and the Grand Grill for pasta, salads, sandwiches and Pinoy barbecue, among others. The Safari-themed pool's self-chlorinating process transforms salt water into the pool water. Mount Sea Grand Resort has business center, recreation area, ballrooms, function rooms, souvenir shop and huts with *inihaw* setup. Mount Sea Grand Resort offers special corporate rates and packages for out-of-town guests. Call the Manila Sales Office at 3010530 (loc. 285290); or e-mail info@mountsearesorts.com.

ASIANA AIRLINES HONORS TRAVEL AGENCIES
Multi-awarded Asiana Airlines (OZ) recently honored industry partners with a celebration at Century Park Sheraton. The airline awarded top performing travel agencies from the Philippines and Korea for 2006. Photo shows Transnational Diversified Group Deputy President-Air and Travel, Minki Bautista (second from left) accepting the award for American Express-Adventure International Tours, Inc. From left, Asiana Airlines passenger sales supervisor, Jeanne Magluyan with passenger sales representatives Michelle Flores and Paolo Pagsanjan.

THE NATIONAL Association of Independent Travel Agencies (NAITAS) held its 6th general membership meeting and costume party at the Hyatt Regency ballroom. NAITAS president Angel Ramos Bognot is shown with, from left, Christian Yap and costume winners Tess Sotto, Thaemar Achocoso and Shilla Johnson.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo pouring champagne on PAL's brand new Airbus Aircraft with Dr. Andreas Heizner (Lufthansa Technik Phils.-president and CEO), Dr. Lucio Tan (PAL's chair and CEO) and Jaime Bautista (PAL's president and COO)

A celebrated landing

PHILIPPINE AIRLINES RECENTLY CELEbrated the arrival of the first of 20 brand-new single-aisle Airbus planes with a big celebration.

President Macapagal-Arroyo was the guest of honor of the celebration held in the main hangar of the Lufthansa Technik Philippines in Pasay City.

The over 700 guests from the government, diplomatic corps, business sector and society included Trade and Industry secretary Peter Favila, Pasay City Rep. Consuelo Dy, ATO assistant secretary Nilo Jatico, Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Franklin Ebdalin, Tourism Planning & Promotions Undersecretary Eduardo Jarque Jr., Miaa general manager Alfonso Cusi and Miaa Asst. general manager Angel Atutubo.

Also present were German Ambassador to the Philippines Axel Weishaupt, French Ambassador to the Philippines Gerard Chesnel and Dominique Lebastard, French economic and commercial counselor.

Top executives from Airbus, Panasonic Avionics Corporation, Recaro Aircraft Seating, Honeywell Aerospace, Lantal, KID Systeme and various foreign and local financial institutions, as well as over 150 international travel and cargo agents also attended.

They were welcomed by PAL executives led by chair and CEO Lucio C. Tan. Other PAL officials were Harry Tan, lawyer Estelito Mendoza, Gabriel Singson, Cesar Santos, Michael Tan, president and COO Jaime Bautista and executive vice president for the commercial group Henry So Uy.

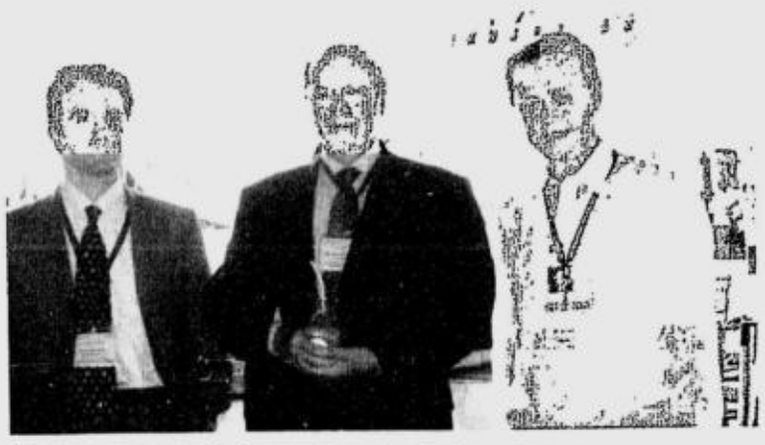
President Macapagal-Arroyo officially launched the aircraft by pouring champagne on its nose.

The brief program included a performance by Jose Mari Chan accompanied by the PAL chorale.

The new fleet includes a 21st century-enhanced cabin, the first for an Asian carrier; state-of-the-art passenger amenities (such as audio-video on-demand in-flight entertainment) and a new interior design patterned after the country's picturesque coastline.

Coffee from Figaro and hot chocolate from Antonio Pueo were served with the hors d'oeuvres and brunch by Via Mare.

FROM left: Trade secretary Peter Favila, Michael Tan, PAL director Estelito Mendoza and Miaa general manager Alfonso Cusi



DOMINIQUE Lebastard (French Embassy economic and commercial counsellor); French Ambassador Gerard Chesnel; and Henry So Uy (PAL's EVP, commercial group)

JOERG Schulte (Recaro Aircraft Seating GmbH & Co. sales manager for Asia), PAL's Maver Mayuga and PAL-AVP Annabelle Tan-Go, and Ruediger Jansen (KID Systeme Airbus VP-customer service)

AIR Transportation Office assistant secretary Nilo Jatico

CEBU distinguished guests Manuel Osmeña, Cebu Gov. Gwen Garcia, Margaret Gaisano-Ang and Dennis Valdes

GAISANO family photo Justin, Jessica, Merill Tiffany, Vivian and Jack Gaisano, and engaged couple Derek Chua and Abigail Gaisano

METRO Gaisano ladies Rose Jose, Julie Montano, Sea Princess, Cary Santiago and makeup artist Wenwen Zaspa at Waterfront Hotel

Cebu puts her best . . .

From page C1

town after 10 years of working for a Beirut-based couture house.

Who says the war in Lebanon doesn't have any positive effects? Now home for good, Cary is rapidly gaining fashion ground for his innovative gowns. Watch out for his name as his creations gain ground among fashion icons.

I first met Cary two years ago at, of all places, the Timex plant inauguration in Mactan. Cary was on holiday at the time, but created several gowns that were featured in local fashion glossies. I instantly knew I wanted to have his creations. His flowing, textured gowns with intricate cutouts and precision layerings are truly works of art.

Fast track to December 2006, with Cary having made monumental fashion waves at the recent Metrowear '07 Gala Show where he presented his collection, along with 22 other mainstream and equally talented designers.

For this major fashion event, I still had no access to Cary. Instead, I wore an elegant flowing gown with wired details by upcoming creative designer **Oliver Tolentino** (tel. 09177899468). But I made sure I also got to talk to Cary after the show.

For his first Manila fashion appearance, Cary did leave an impact on Manila's best-dressed crowd. His stunning, nude fabric designs with laser cutouts received high praises and loud applause. His assigned muse, beauty goddess **Lucy Torres Gomez**, handed him a bouquet of flowers at the end of the show.

By coincidence, the current issue of Cebu's lifestyle magazine, Zee Magazine, features Cary Santiago couture worn by Cebu's highly regarded women of today, and features Lucy on the cover. I picked up my copy at the Waterfront Hotel, where I met Cary for my one-and-only fitting.

SHANG Mactan's PR ladies Gwen de la Cruz and Sharon Samarista

SHANG Mactan ladies Lesley Anne Tan and Samantha Lazarte

Citrus wedding

How does one define trust? I didn't even have a backup outfit when I flew to Cebu on the morning of the wedding. I was amazed it fit like a glove and was quite comfortable. I guess I must not have gained any holiday fat.

What separated the Ong couples' wedding from the Chinese tradition of staying with predominantly red and gold hues is Maribel's own chosen color theme using shades of citrus. The principal sponsors wore a pomelo shade while the rest wore orange, lemon and lime tones.

To my surprise, the principal sponsors included the crème de la crème of *ninongs* and *ninangs*, **President Macapagal-Arroyo** and business bigwig **Lucio Tan.** At the wedding ceremony at Cebu's Sacred Heart Church, President Arroyo was warmly received with spontaneous applause during the processional march. She is truly loved in Cebu. We exchanged pleasantries and happy thoughts about the canonization of Assumption's Blessed Mother **Marie Eugenie** that is finally happening this year.

Watching Erwyn and Maribel tie the knot got me reminiscing about my own wedding, now all of 12 years in the past. I am so glad I found someone who loves my multitude of costumes, outfits, moods and demanding personality. I wish the newlyweds, Erwyn and Maribel, a blissful life together—as much as is legally possible!

Another notable Cebuana, my *feng shui* adviser **Maritess Allen,** told me the Year of the Pig is a most auspicious one because it has a double spring. So this year is really is a great one in which to get married, to invest or to open a business. The peso is gaining strength and the stock market is booming.

'Resibo' raffle

Speaking of moving forward, I had the chance to watch the Grand Christmas Draw of the Bureau of Internal Revenue and Pagcor's Premyo Sa Resibo last month at Market! Market! My husband **Dennis** now works with PhilWeb, which has been assisting the BIR and Pagcor in running Premyo Sa Resibo. He told me that the program gave out P35 million in prizes in 2006! I really should start texting in my receipts!

It was great to see Finance Secretary **Gary Teves** draw out 10 lucky raffle numbers worth a million pesos each. These new millionaires are starting the Year of the Pig with their best feet forward.

E-mail the author at seaprincess @inquirer.com.ph.

PREMYO Sa Resibo hosts Dennis Valdes, Lilia Guillermo, Jojo Bunag, Pagcor chair Efraim Genuino, Teresa Garcia, Finance Sec. Gary Teves, Rey David and JM Rodriguez

CEBU family friends Denise and Georgia Osmeña, Bryan Prieto and Javi Osmeña

ENJOYING Shang Mactan. Christian, Crickette, Nicole and Camille Tantoco

ANSWER TO SUNDAY CROSSWORD

P	A	U	L		C	A	R	E	E	N		A	N	A
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CEBU Convention Center brightly beaming and ready for the Asean Summit

Deadline for awards for women Jan. 15

GOINGS-ON

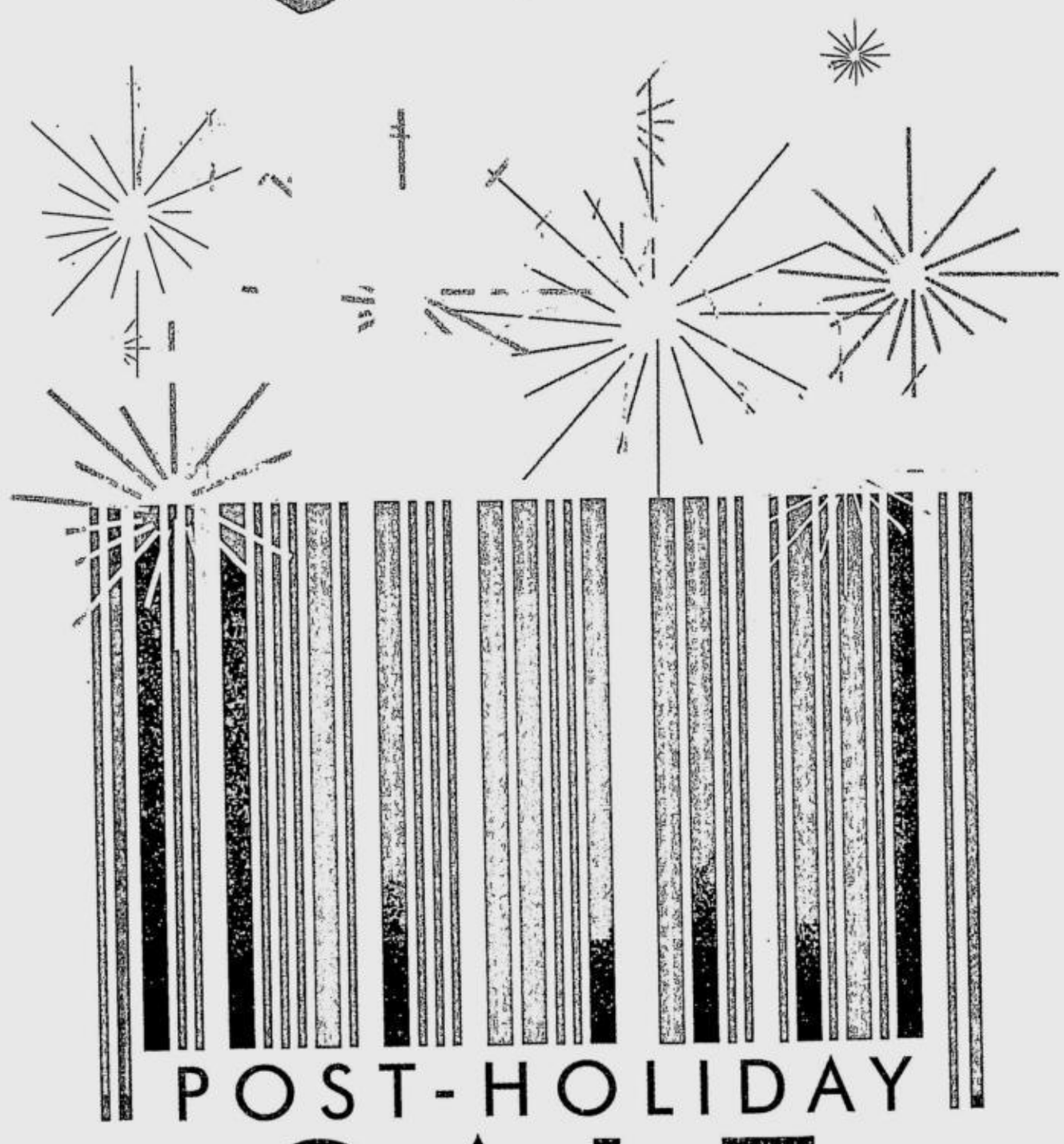
THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMISsion of nominees for the Women's Opportunity Award of the Soroptimist International of the Philippines Region (SIPR) is Jan. 15. Linabelle Ruth R. Villarica, SIPR governor, said eligible were women seeking to improve their economic status by gaining additional skills, training or education. Also to be given is the Violet Richardson Award for young women whose volunteer activities make the community and world a better place. Awarding will be sometime in May. Winners will get cash prizes. Call 8950656, 8969641; or e-mail sipr@pworld.net.ph.

CONCERT. Concert at the Park presents the Lahing Kayumanggi Dance Ensemble, Jan. 7, 5 p.m., at the Rizal Park Open-Air Auditorium, Manila. Admission is free.

WRITING WORKSHOPS. Creative writing workshops for adults (21 years and above) are scheduled for the entire weekends of January and February. The workshop will be conducted by writer-book author Visitacion "Chit" de la Torre. The workshops will run for six sessions, 9:30-11:30 a.m. and 1:30-3:30 p.m.

SCIENCE WORKSHOP. Pharmaceutical company Wyeth recently conducted a Science Writer's Workshop in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Media representatives from various Asian countries attended the workshop spearheaded by Dr. Yhu-Cheling Huang, pediatrics professor at Chang Gung University and chief of the division of pediatric disease at Chang Gung Memorial Hospital in Taiwan. The event aimed to inform the media on the importance of vaccination in preventing pneumococcal diseases, leading causes of sickness and death worldwide.

Shangri-La Plaza



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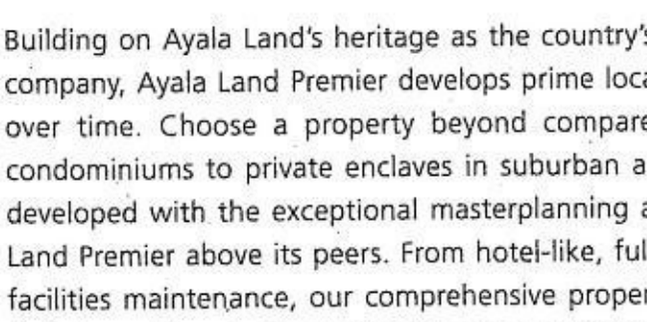
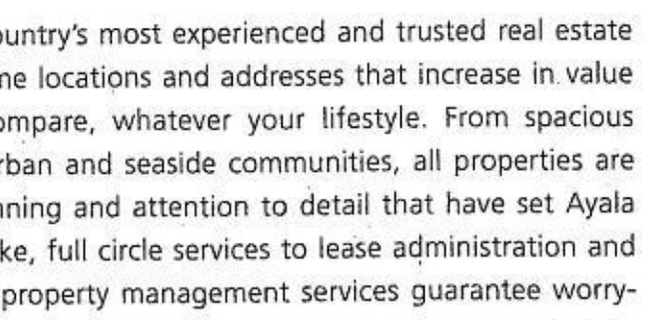
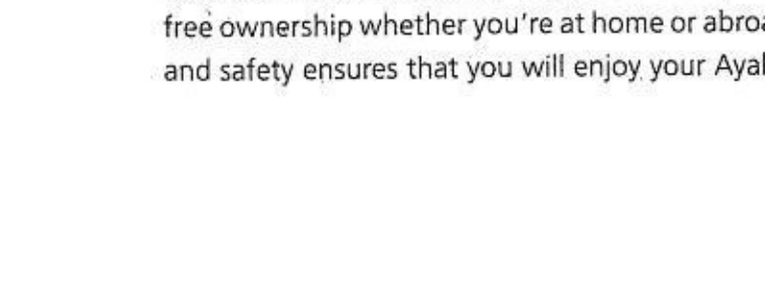
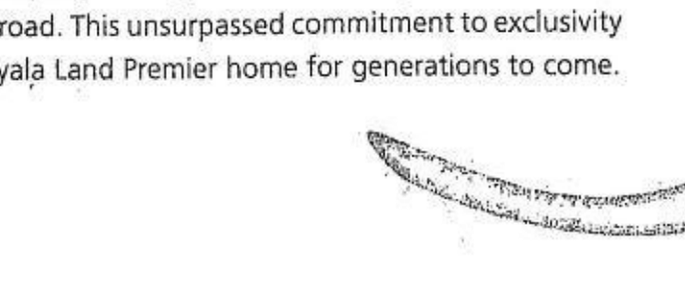

THE RESIDENCES AT GREENBELT Greenbelt, Makati City


ONE SERENDRA Bonifacio Global City, Taguig

ANVAYA COVE Morong, Bataan


AYALA WESTGROVE HEIGHTS Silang, Cavite



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ENTERTAINMENT

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Lea auditioned for Fantine

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

TAKE FIVE

She was eight months pregnant when she sang for Schönberg. Now she's Broadway-bound ... with baby

LEA SALONGA WAS JUST about to pop, eight months pregnant with firstborn Nicole Beverly, when she sang for composer Claude-Michel Schönberg, in a bid for the role of Fantine in the new Cameron Mackintosh production of "Les Miserables" on Broadway.

Schönberg was the same man who tested her for the role of Kim, heroine of "Miss Saigon," in 1988.

In spite of her awards—including a Larry and a Tony for "Miss Saigon"—and the fact that she had worked in past Mackintosh musicals ("Miss Saigon" and as Eponine in "Les Miz"), she still had to go through the wringer.

She never had qualms about trying out for roles, and Fantine, was no different. Until then, Lea said, she hadn't eyed Fantine—not even when she did "Les Miz" in New York, London and Honolulu from 1993 to '96.

"I was only 22 then," she explained. Now she can better appreciate Fantine's struggles. "She's also the mother of a little girl."

Of course baby Nic, born on May 16, is going with mom to New York, where "Les Miz" is running at The Broadhurst Theater until the summer of 2007. Lea is replacing Panama-born Daphne Rubin-Vega, a Tony nominee.

LEA/ D2

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GALLERIA 637-8111

1 MANO PO 5 • THX
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
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3 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8
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4 TATLONG BARAHA 1:20MF 3:30LMF
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5 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
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6 Reserved for VICTORY CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

7 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH
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10 LIGALIG
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PIONEER

1 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
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DEJA VU SNEAK PREVIEW
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STA. ROSA (049) 837-0907
1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 MANO PO 5
3 SUPER NOYPI / DEJA VU SNEAK PREVIEW
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8

LIPA (043) 757-3684 (043) 312-5870
1 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
2 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8/DEJA VU / DEJA VU
3 LIGALIG
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA

DASMARINAS (046) 852-2125 (046) 416-1332
1 SUPER NOYPI
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 MANO PO 5 / DEJA VU SNEAK PREVIEW

ANGELES (045) 892-2345
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2 MANO PO 5
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8/DEJA VU

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1 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8
2 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA/ DEJA VU
3 MANO PO 5
4 SUPER NOYPI
5 LIGALIG
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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1 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 SUPER NOYPI
4 MANO PO 5
5 LIGALIG / DEJA VU SNEAK PREVIEW
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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1 SUPER NOYPI / DEJA VU Sneak Preview
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
5 LIGALIG
6 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH

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3 MANO PO 5
4 SUPER NOYPI / DEJA VU SNEAK
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6 SHAKE, RATTLE and ROLL 8

Lea auditioned for Fantine

From page D1

Last time Lea was on Broadway was in a revival of Rodgers and Hammerstein's "Flower Drum Song," in 2002.

"This is a completely new experience for me—my first time to perform on Broadway while caring for a child at the same time," she explained.

Fortunately, her mother Ligaya and husband Robert Chien will be around, too. They are all leaving together on Feb. 22, Lea's birthday.

What is it like to get the plum role?

It feels really exciting! I'm already giddy and my head's starting to prepare for the trip to New York, as well as for the work. I can't wait to meet everyone in the company and start singing the role.

LEA as Kim

... and as Eponine

Right now I'm waiting for my script and score to arrive, so I can start studying the part. I'd like the rehearsal period to be as smooth and easy as possible for myself and everyone I'll be working with.

Is it a dream role? Fantine's signature song is "I Dreamed a Dream," after all?

It wasn't a dream role in the way that Eponine was (in the sense that I was near-obsessed with her even before I played the part), but now that it's here, it's something I can't wait to sink my teeth into, to go through her journey and challenge myself to play this character.

It's a beautifully written part vocally, and it'll be a supreme honor and pleasure to live her life night after night.

How did you land the job?

I actually sang for it a couple of times, once when Claude-Michel Schönberg was in Manila and then when John Robertson, one of Cameron Mackintosh's associates in Australia, came to Manila.

I sang for Claude-Michel when I was eight months pregnant, and for John in early December. They both were my strongest advocates and champions, and I thank them both for being in my corner.

It was after John heard me sing that things were set in motion.

Yeah, I played Eponine, but I guess the production wanted to make sure (and rightly so) that I was right for Fantine.

How are you preparing?

Right now, I'm not really doing anything ... I'm just going through my days of being in Manila and enjoying my time with friends and family. Preparation will really start for me when I get my material to study.

Does this mean you will be based in New York for a while?

I'll be based in New York for the entirety of the show's run, and right now that's through the summer of 2007.

Will you be bringing your baby to the US?

OF COURSE!!!

How will you balance mothering and working on Broadway?

I guess in the same way other working moms do, with lots of help. My mother will definitely come with me, as well as Rob. I'm trying to get my *yaya* (nanny) to come as well. Nic is so comfortable with her and trusts her, and it'll be difficult to find someone else like that.

I heard your mom will be helping all throughout?

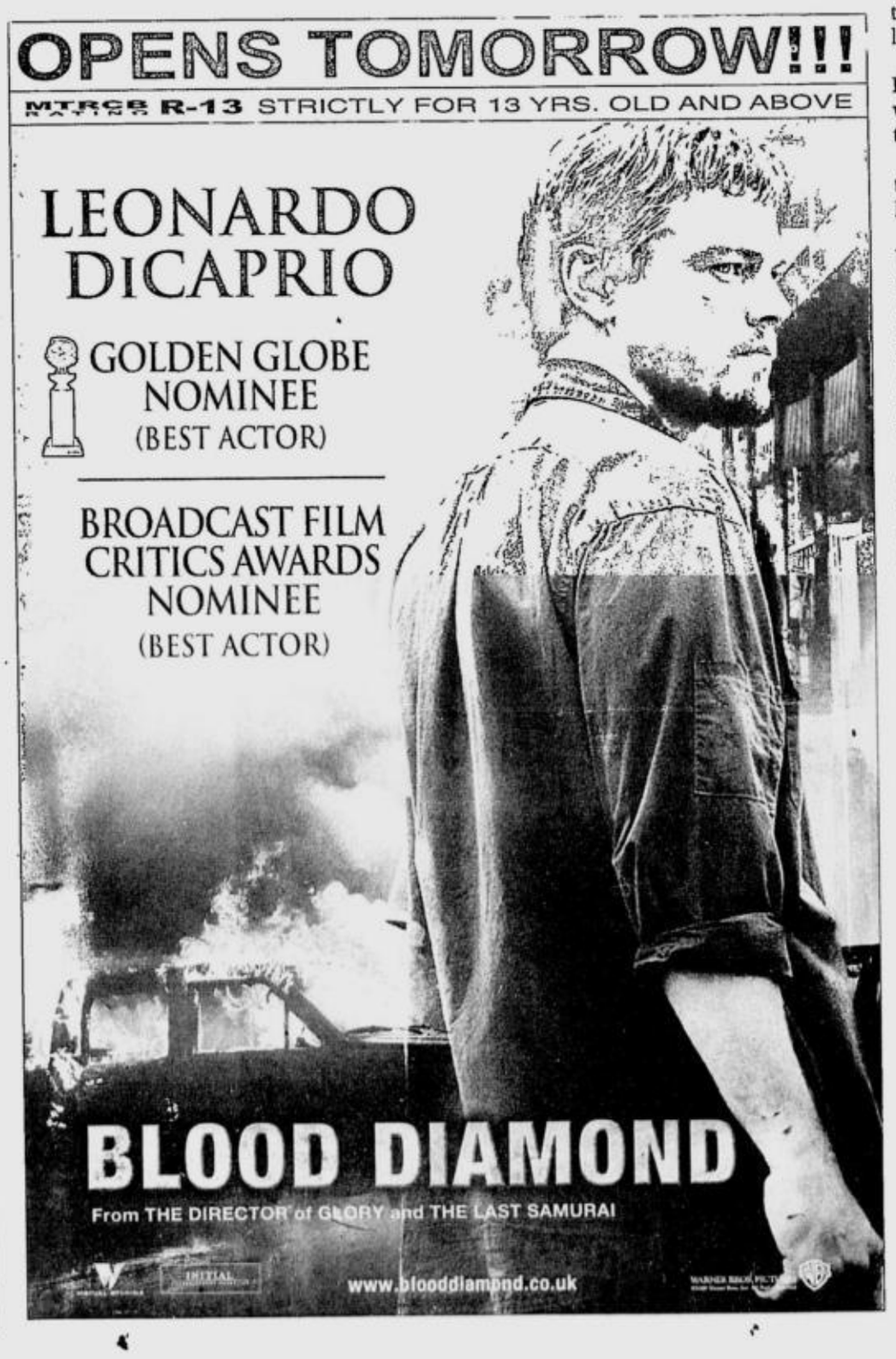
Oh definitely. And thankfully, she loves New York.

What is the significance of playing Fantine for you? Especially since it seems you will be the first Asian to play her on Broadway?

It means that I return to Broadway again. I've missed performing there, and am looking forward to it. It means that there's another Filipino joining the company. (There are two lead actors who are half-Pinoy: Ali Ewoldt who plays Cosette and Adam Jacobs who plays Marius ... at least that's what I know.) So I'm not going to be the only Pinoy in the company, and given that the show's "Les Miz," it feels really good!

What are your other projects?

Well, I have a new album with Sony-BMG coming out this month. I also have concerts in Manila (Feb. 11), Cebu (Feb. 14) and Davao (Feb. 17). It'll be a great way to send me off, that's for sure!



And MMFF's big winner is . . . Hollywood!

IN THE ENSUING CONTROVERSY SURrounding the Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF), INQUIRER Entertainment can't help thinking that the real winner is ... Hollywood!

Several observers have pointed out: Hollywood studios and their local reps are only too happy to snap up the holiday play dates enjoyed by the MMFF, should the local industry leaders fail to get their act together.

Which makes moves to abolish MMFF ...

RUSHES

Overheard

Overheard at the MMFF awards: There was very strong lobbying for two actresses (both newbies in the awards game) and a movie (a stale franchise, critics insist).

Was that what prompted presenter and Best Supporting Actress nominee (for "Ligalig") Celia Rodriguez to comment onstage: "*Maganda tayo kasi hindi tayo nanggagapang ng* award." Then she looked as if she threw away the piece of paper that bore the name of the Villegas Cultural Awardee ("Kasal").

"It was a joke ... and the paper fell by accident," Rodriguez told the INQUIRER.

Host Edu Manzano jested that MMFF stands for Mrs. Monteverde Film Festival—referring to the fact that Lily Monteverde's Regal and MaQ produced four of the nine entries this year.

MMFF officials came to Manzano's defense: "He was just reading from the teleprompter."

"People are bound to talk; I'm immune to all that," Monteverde said.

New genre

Still on the MMFF: "Mano Po 5: Gua Ai Di" launched a new genre—romantic-comedy-drama-cooking show.

Not one of ours

INQUIRER Libre would like to inform the public that it does not allow any staff member to solicit gifts or money from news sources, like politicians and show biz personalities.

This is in connection with reports that one Jayjay Espiritu, posing as a staffer of Libre, attended the recent Metro Manila Film Festival awards rites in Aliw Theater and distributed letters asking actors for Christmas gifts.

There is no Jayjay Espiritu in our Libre. If anyone else poses as one of us and seeks favors, please call 897-8808, local 359 or 353, or e-mail libre_pdi@inquirer.com.ph.

Demi, Ashton plan baby

LOS ANGELES—Their May-December romance has lasted longer than many a Hollywood marriage, and now actress Demi Moore, 44, tells Vanity Fair magazine that she and husband Ashton Kutcher, 28, are considering having kids. "Most definitely," she told the widely read magazine in its February issue that hit newsstands on Tuesday. "Once you hit three, it's really, like, 'What's the difference between [three or] four or five?'"

ASHTON Kutcher and Demi Moore

Moore already has three children ages 18, 15 and 13 with former husband, actor Bruce Willis. She and Willis divorced in 2000. The magazine said Moore's kids now call Kutcher "MOD" for "My Other Dad." *Reuters*

Whitney selling clothes

NEW YORK—Looking for an Atelier Versace tan chiffon evening dress, beaded bustier or catsuit worn by Grammy-winning pop star Whitney Houston? Or maybe an assortment of music awards won by her soon-to-be ex-husband Bobby Brown?

Houston, one of the most celebrated pop artists of the 1980s and '90s, is being forced to sell off clothes, instruments and sound equipment to pay a debt to a warehouse storing the items. The sale, set Jan. 9 at A.J. Willner Auctions, has been ordered by the New Jersey Superior Court.

WHITNEY HOUSTON

"It is not unusual for an artist to sell ... equipment and costumes no longer needed," Houston's publicist, Nancy Seltzer, said in a statement, giving no details on how much Houston owes.

More than 400 lots are listed for sale, including pianos, keyboards, organs, drums, designer hats, shoes and outfits from well-known names such as Giorgio Armani, Jean Paul Gaultier, Pamela Dennis, Gianni Versace and Dolce & Gabbana. *Reuters*

Influential Hispanic

NEW YORK—Jennifer Lopez is among the entertainers selected by People en Espanol for its "100 Most Influential Hispanics" issue.

Lopez, 38, who graces the cover of the magazine's February issue, now on newsstands, says "being an example to others is a big part of my work." *AP*

GEORGE Lucas and his daughter Amanda REUTERS

George Lucas' new title

BEVERLY HILLS—George Lucas, the mastermind behind the "Star Wars" and "Indiana Jones" sagas, can add another credit to his illustrious resume: Rose Parade grand marshal.

Lucas embraced his latest challenge as the public face of the 118th annual Tournament of Roses on New Year's Day.

"There's nothing like being a grand marshal. It's a completely unique experience," said Lucas, 62.

During the parade, the three-piece "Star Wars Spectacular," an entry that celebrated the 1977 release of "Star Wars," was a huge draw for many. There were 45 floats, 22 marching bands and 23 equestrian units. *AP*

KYLIE MINOGUE

Kylie in London

LONDON—Australian pop star Kylie Minogue saw in the New Year with her first British show since recovering from breast cancer. She was based in London for many years.

The singer, 38, kicked off the British leg of her "Showgirl Homecoming Tour" in front of 12,000 fans at Wembley Arena in northwest London on Sunday night. A ticket was 65 pounds ($127). *AFP*

Queen cites stars

LONDON—Britain's Queen Elizabeth bestowed awards last weekend on singer Rod Stewart, soccer star Steven Gerrard and her granddaughter—world equestrian champion Zara Phillips.

The queen also granted medals to filmmaker Peter Greenaway, actors Hugh Laurie and Penelope Keith and authors Alexander McCall Smith and Colin Thubron in her New Year's honors list. *Reuters*

Kidman vs paparazzi

SYDNEY—Hollywood superstar Nicole Kidman has cut short a holiday in her native Australia after calling in police to stop paparazzi harassing her and husband Keith Urban, a report said Tuesday.

Sydney's Daily Telegraph reported Kidman and country music singer Urban flew out of Sydney after a row with photographer Jamie Fawcett. The couple were on reportedly on holiday at Rosedale on the New South Wales South coast when Kidman became angry with Fawcett as he took photographs when their car pulled over to the side of the road.

NICOLE Kidman and Keith Urban

Fawcett told the newspaper the star rolled down the car window and shouted an obscenity at him. He said Urban tried to calm the actress. "It was more her snapping than him," Fawcett said. "He appeared ... to pull her back into the car." *AFP*

Sutherland, rodeo king

NEW YORK—Kiefer Sutherland is an Emmy award winner for his role as agent Jack Bauer on "24," but he also holds another prestigious title: rodeo champion.

"What I lacked as a roper and a cowboy I could make up for in horses," the 40-year-old actor says in the January/February issue of Men's Vogue magazine, on newsstands this week. "Roping is one of those sports like polo where you get infinitely better the better your horses are. I had some great horses." *AP*

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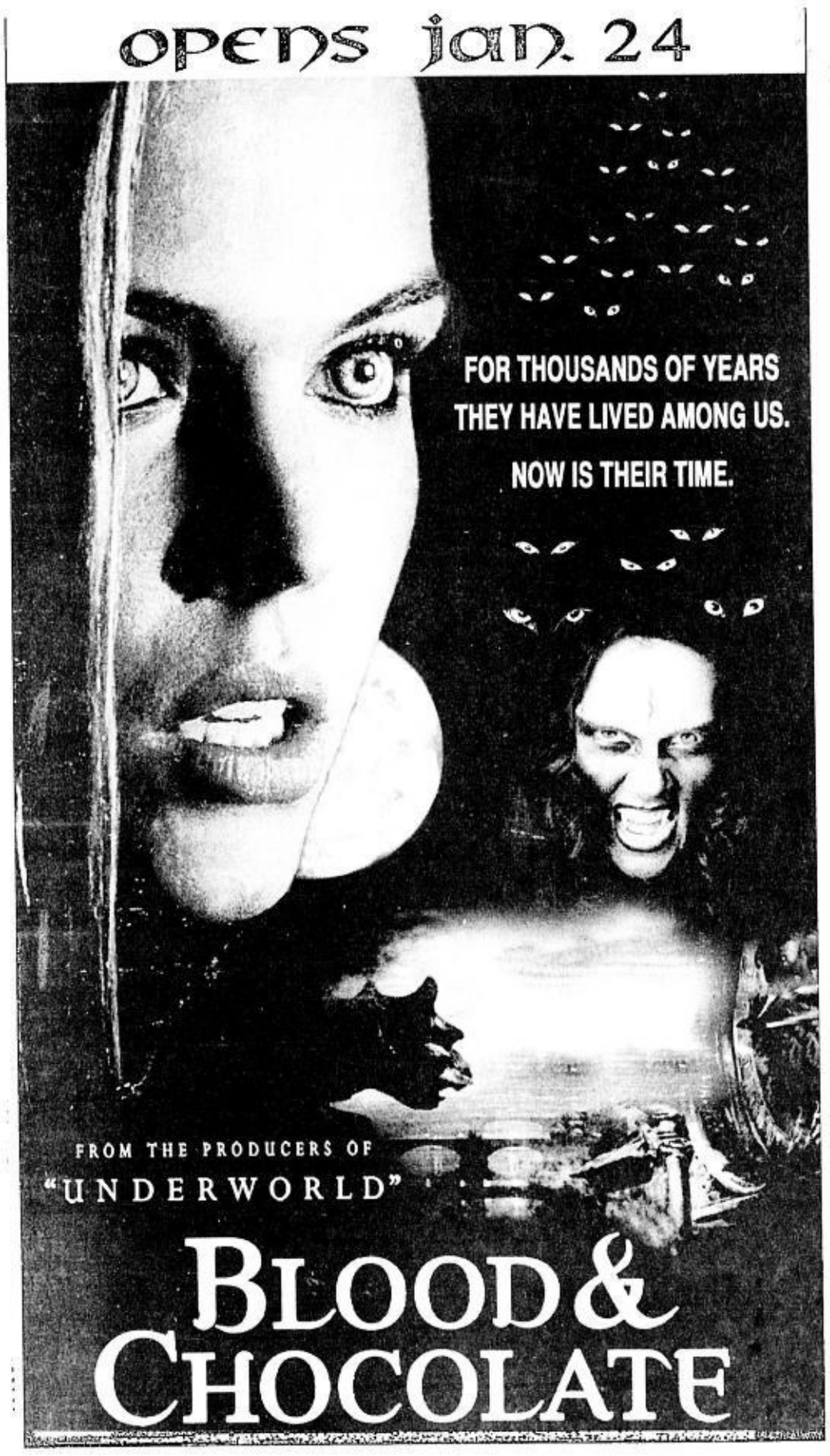

Kidding around with George Clooney, pa

LOS ANGELES—HOW DO WE PROVE HOW charming **George Clooney** is in person?

When we ran into George at the premiere party of "Syriana" in New York the other year, he kissed my wife **Janet** on the right cheek. Since then, Janet has not washed her right cheek. And when we met George again a week later in LA after that New York encounter, he somehow remembered Janet. That did it. As we left the party, Janet told me that, from then on, I could only kiss her on the left cheek.

Advice for every man: If you and your wife or girlfriend ever cross-pa and make a quick about not been voted twice b Sexiest Man Alive for no

Outside of movies, wh do?

I just want to dance professional dancer, tea

Join "Dancing With Th

Oh, dancing with t things I'm working on. one we really have to ke things that are much n ways. So I'll probably k until something gets fixe

How about doing a musical film?

They looped my en tire singing voice in, "C Brother..." (laughter). I don't think there's a mu sical in my future. I messed around with them in theater when I was young. I only lacked skills—other than that, I was really good at it (laughter).

How much do you en joy writing scripts?

Ever since I was on sitcoms, I was involve ing has become a big p the movie I'm doing over 10 years ago. I rewrite. We tried it a came together. So I spe Italy.

I don't have a comp pieces of paper. I spent out how the movie wo morning and it was fair

Are you satisfied with your acting career?

I have gotten to a pl where all those elemen when I was younger are tually happy with the id things that aren't based I look.

I'm enjoying the sort- actor part. There are m able to do. I've been al what was expected of m do because everybody

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...rt 2

...hs with George, grab her ...face. George Clooney has ... People Magazine as the ...thing.

...at do you really want to

...laughter). I want to be a ...h jazz.

...e Stars"?

...e former stars. I've got ...The Darfur issue is a big ...p pushing. Those are the ...ore satisfying in a lot of ...ep pushing those things ...d.

GEORGE Clooney and Cate Blanchett in "The Good German"

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Ruben V. Nepales

...as a writer. Lately, writ-...ssion. The screenplay of ...vith Renee was written ...ut it needed a drastic ...few times and it never ...t the summer writing in

...ter. I just write things on ...ll summer trying to figure ...ld work. I woke up one ...easy to write.

...where you are now in

...ce in my life and career ...that were used to sell me ...no longer applied. I'm ac-...that now I'm able to do ...n someone's idea of how

...of moving into character ...ny more things I will be ...e to sidestep the idea of ...earlier. That was hard to ...shes me in this direction ...says, go do romantic ...edies. If I do that, I know ...ill end with me turning ...and everybody saying, ...doesn't look so young ...more, he's got a lot of ...hair and maybe we'll go ...somebody else.' It's a ...ch better road where you ...do it the other way. I'll ...apart—grow a beard.

...you still have secrets ...t you can reveal to us ...the first time?

...ext question (laughter). ...been famous long ...ugh now that I don't ...k there are really many ...ets. I am out of secrets ...except that I'm wearing ...upee and I'm 5'3" (laugh-... My teeth are false and I ...e one glass eye.

...have spoken against ...e of the policies of ...sident Bush. Do you ...etimes worry about ...r personal safety?

...have a guy that starts my ...and eats my food first ...ghter). Back in 2003, ...n it was really bad, peo-...were out in front of the ...ters and put things all ...the Internet. Am I get-...in trouble? That's my ...paranoia and narcis-...working (laughter). ...at I realize is that those ...spiracies take a lot more ...k and they focus on ...ebody who's more politi-...y relevant than I am. I ...'t worry about any of ...f.

...w were you like as a ...nager?

...ople would argue that I ...still like I was as a ...nager (laughter). I had a ...t time growing up in a ...town in Kentucky with ...00 people because I could ...any sport in high school ...e they didn't have ...ugh players. We were ...ble teams. We lost every ...e.

...t 14, on first year of high ...ol, I had Bell's Palsy ...re half of my face was ...lyzed. I fell into that part ...igh school where I was ...kid who made the jokes ...it stuck with me. My ...ving up years were about ...ing ways to keep things ...t or have fun with them. ...ly family is really funny. I ...w up in a household of people telling jokes. My mom made all our clothes. My mom made me—I just saw a picture of it, that's why I bring it up—a leisure suit of Naugahyde, out of fake leather (laughter) with fringe on it. The fake leather rolled off eventually. I had these blousy shirts. I had giant bell-bottom pants and big-heeled shoes. I was 13 years old. I saw that picture and I thought, I can't believe I have a career (laughter).

We know so much about your father but nothing about your mother.

My father is a public figure—he is a newsman. My mother is a private figure. She's pretty shy although she writes some things for the newspaper every week. I try not to bring her into the fray whenever I can help it.

Were you raised a Catholic?

Yes. I was an altar boy. I could do Latin Mass. Once a week, I had to go to confession. When I was in second grade, I really didn't have a whole lot to confess every week. But I had to show up. At one point I realized the priest knew who I was because there were only 10 kids. I decided I would only confess the things I thought were okay for him to hear (laughter).

I read about this saint who put a pebble in her shoe and walked around for penance. So I would just confess what I wanted to confess and then I would fill my shoes with gravel. And I'd jump off the top of my bunk bed when I got home and I was completely cleansed of all sin.

Cate's character in this movie evokes Marlene Dietrich. Do you like Dietrich?

Yes. She was a very close friend of my Aunt Rosemary's. They were really good friends.

Cate did a movie with your friend Brad Pitt. You also made one with her and now she went home to Australia to become artistic co-director of the Sydney Theatre Company. What did you guys do to her?

I don't care for that woman—I'll tell you that right off the bat. She's got no talent, first of all (laughter). I am really excited about it. I think she's going to direct a play as well. She and her husband are very involved in the theater. We corrupted her. We made her sick of films just enough (laughter).

Cate is one of those actors—like **Meryl Streep**—where she could just be having a conversation with me and then **Steven (Soderbergh)** would go, "Okay, ready and action." And she'll turn it on immediately. She doesn't wear me out on the set, like, "I'm **Ingrid Bergman**, don't talk to me for the next week."

Are you comfortable around strong women and who are the women that you admire?

First of all, I don't like strong women (laughter). I've always felt really comfortable around them because I have grown up around them. My aunt **(Rosemary Clooney)** was a very strong individual who ran our family. My mother and sister are very strong, too. I've spent time with Senator **(Hillary) Clinton** and other women of power like **Oprah (Winfrey)**. My aunt and I could have had an argument and I'd be mad at her. Then she'd get up stage and sing and I couldn't remember what I was mad about.

When we were in Chad, just south of Darfur, there were people from the International Rescue Committee whom we were working with. They were 23-year-old girls in the middle of nothing. One of the girls was held hostage about a week we left. My dad and I were there for 10 days and it was all I could take. These girls are there for a year.

To me, that was the greatest show of strength and power I've ever seen.

Your aunt (Rosemary) gave you an advice—not to get to 70 without...

Having done all the things you wanted to do.

So are you happy with what you have done so far?

If I got hit by a bus tomorrow, I had a pretty good run.

E-mail the columnist at rvnepales_5585@yahoo.com.

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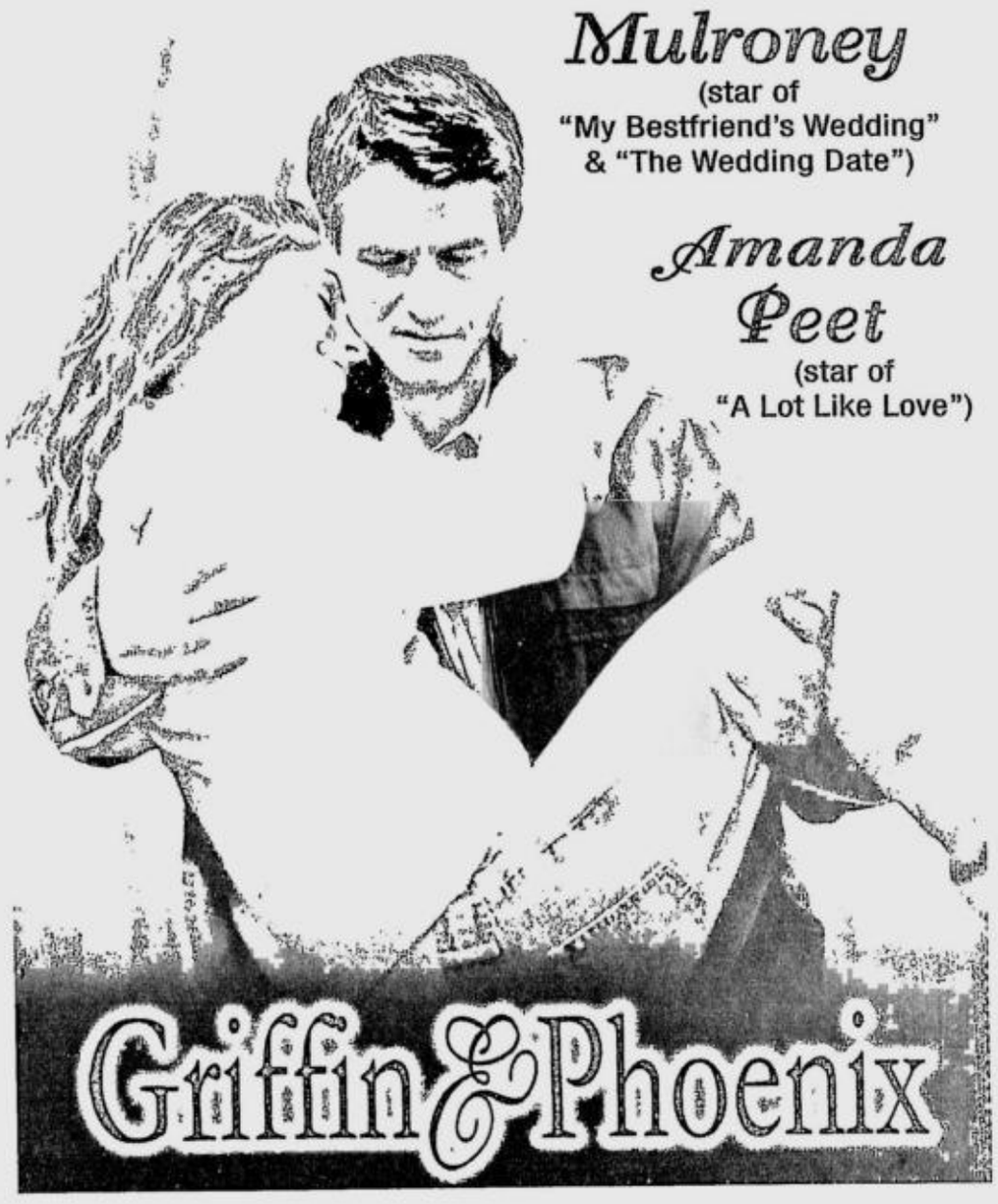

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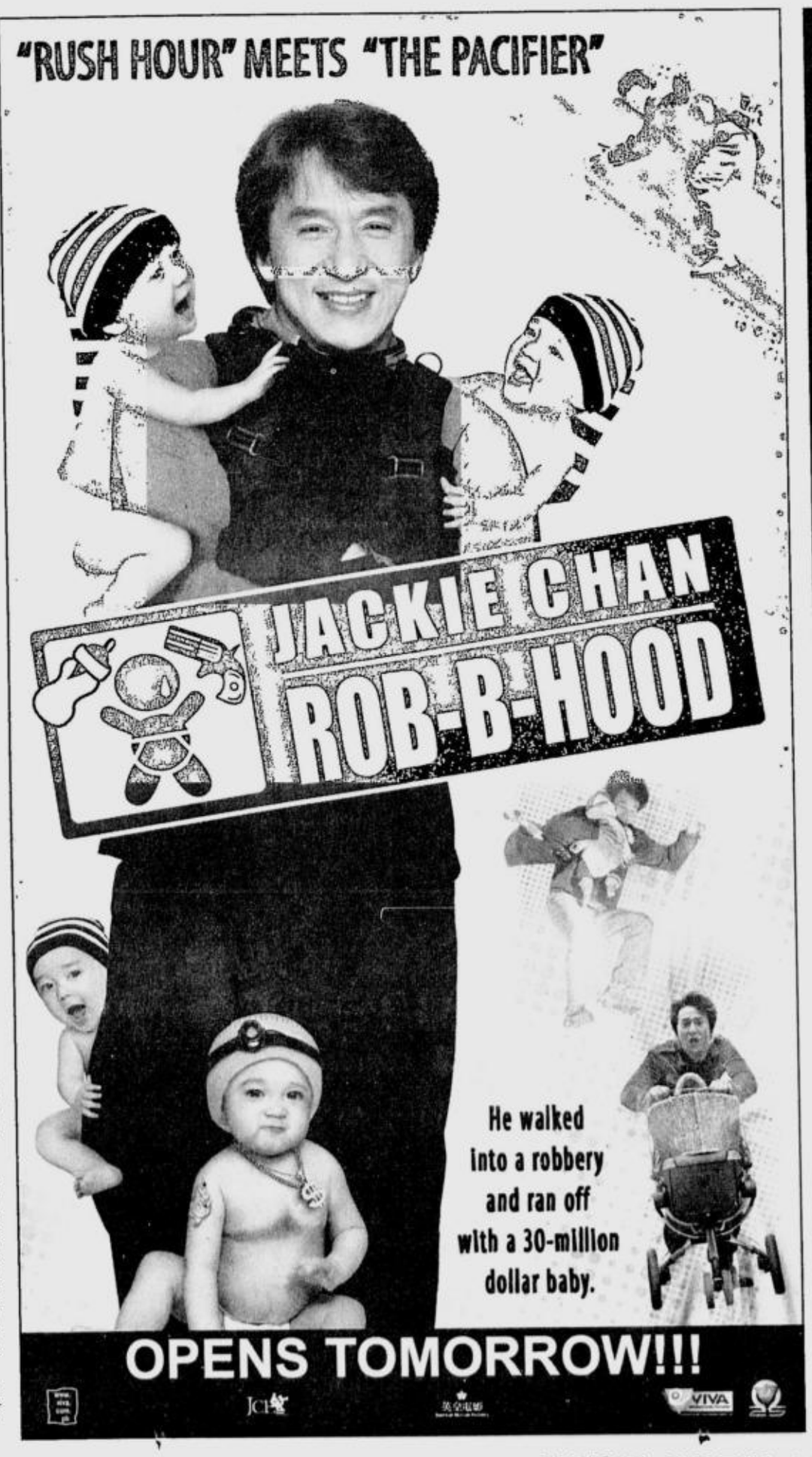

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3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
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4 MANO PO 5
5 LIGALIG
6 SUPER NOYPI
7 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
8 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637681-85
1 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
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5 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
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2 SUPER NOYPI
3 MANO PO 5
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
6 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH/ DEJA VU
7 LIGALIG
8 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 ZSA ZSA ZATURNNAH/ DEJA VU
3 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
4 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
5 MANO PO 5
6 SUPER NOYPI

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884
1 SUPER NOYPI/ DEJA VU
2 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 3

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Sir Cliff Richard returns to Manila for Valentine show

SHOW TIME

CLIFF RICHARD

CLIFF RICHARD, BRITISH POP SUPERSTAR of the 1960s, returns to Manila for a concert on Feb. 13, 8 p.m., at the Araneta Coliseum in Cubao, Quezon City.

Titled "Here And Now Tour 2007: Cliff Richard Live In Manila!" the one-night-only event mounted by Solar Entertainment Corp. is the Manila leg of Richard's current world tour, which kicked off on Nov. 4 at the Wembley Arena in London.

Richard has performed in the country twice before, the last time being in 1984, at the Folk Arts Theater. For this third Philippine concert, he is expected to sing his top hits, including "The Young Ones," "How Wonderful To Know," "The Next Time," "When The Girl In Your Arms Is The Girl In Your Heart," "Summer Holiday," "Constantly," "Bachelor Boy," "Theme For A Dream," "Ocean Deep," "I Only Live To Love You," "Legata Ad Un Granello Di Sabbia" and "Do You Wanna Dance?"

In recognition of his achievements as a music artist, Cliff Richard was knighted on Oct. 25, 1995, the first rock star to be so honored ahead of Paul McCartney (1997) and Elton John (1998).

His latest project, an album of duets featuring materials with Brian May, Dionne Warwick, Anne Murray, Barry Gibb and Daniel O'Donnell, was released to coincide with the launch of his current world tour, which opened to rave reviews.

Tickets are priced at P8,500 P7,500, P6,500, P4,000, P2,000 and P500. Call 991-5555.

Concert for Chin Chin

Top Filipino artists are singing to raise funds for the family of actress Chin Chin Gutierrez, whose house burned down on Dec. 20.

"Cheers To Life" stars Mon David, Giselle Sanchez, Montet Acoymo, Vernie Varga, Richard Merk, Danny Javier, Noel Cabangon, Tots Tolentino, Carl Balita, Family Affair, Greyhound Band, Ivy Violan, John Lesaca, Gary Lising and Boboy Garovillo, among others.

Chin Chin has been hailed by Time Magazine as an Asian Hero for her effort to protect the environment.

"For doing a lot for Mother Earth, she needs all our help and the support as she goes back to the painful process of starting a new life," said Richard Merk.

The bar-bistro is at Greenbelt 3, Ayala Center. Call 757-4720 or 757-4721.

Hip hop night

It's hip hop night on Tuesdays, starting Jan. 9, at Escape Club on E. Rodriguez Avenue in Libis, Quezon City.

Featured artists are DJ Kimozabe, Chris Myx, Dash and Mc G.

Mega at Island Cove

Sharon Cuneta stars in a concert at the Island Cove Leisure Park in Binakayan, Kawit, Cavite on Jan. 20. Call (46) 434-2154, (46) 434-5846 or (02) 810-3718.

Affinity at Shang Plaza Mall

Johnny Alegre Affinity will perform at The Grand Atrium of Shangri-la Plaza Mall on Jan. 13.

With Tots Tolentino on sax, Henry Katindig on keyboards, Mar Dizon on drums and Simon Tan on bass, Johnny Alegre Affinity promises a grand free mini-concert. Call 633-7851.

Tonight

Piano prodigy Oliver Salonga at UP Abelardo Hall; 4 p.m. Call 724-0705.

Tomorrow

Elvis Night featuring RJ, Edgar Opida, Nonie Yambao and Lito Jauregui at RJTV Bar, Jupiter St., Makati

January 9

Jojo A with Dale Adriatico at RJTV Bar, Jupiter St., Makati

January 10

Jojo A with Midnight Connection at RJTV Bar, Jupiter St., Makati

January 12

The Lettermen at the Araneta Coliseum; 8 p.m.

RJ 'n Friends with Moonstrucks at RJTV Bar, Jupiter St., Makati

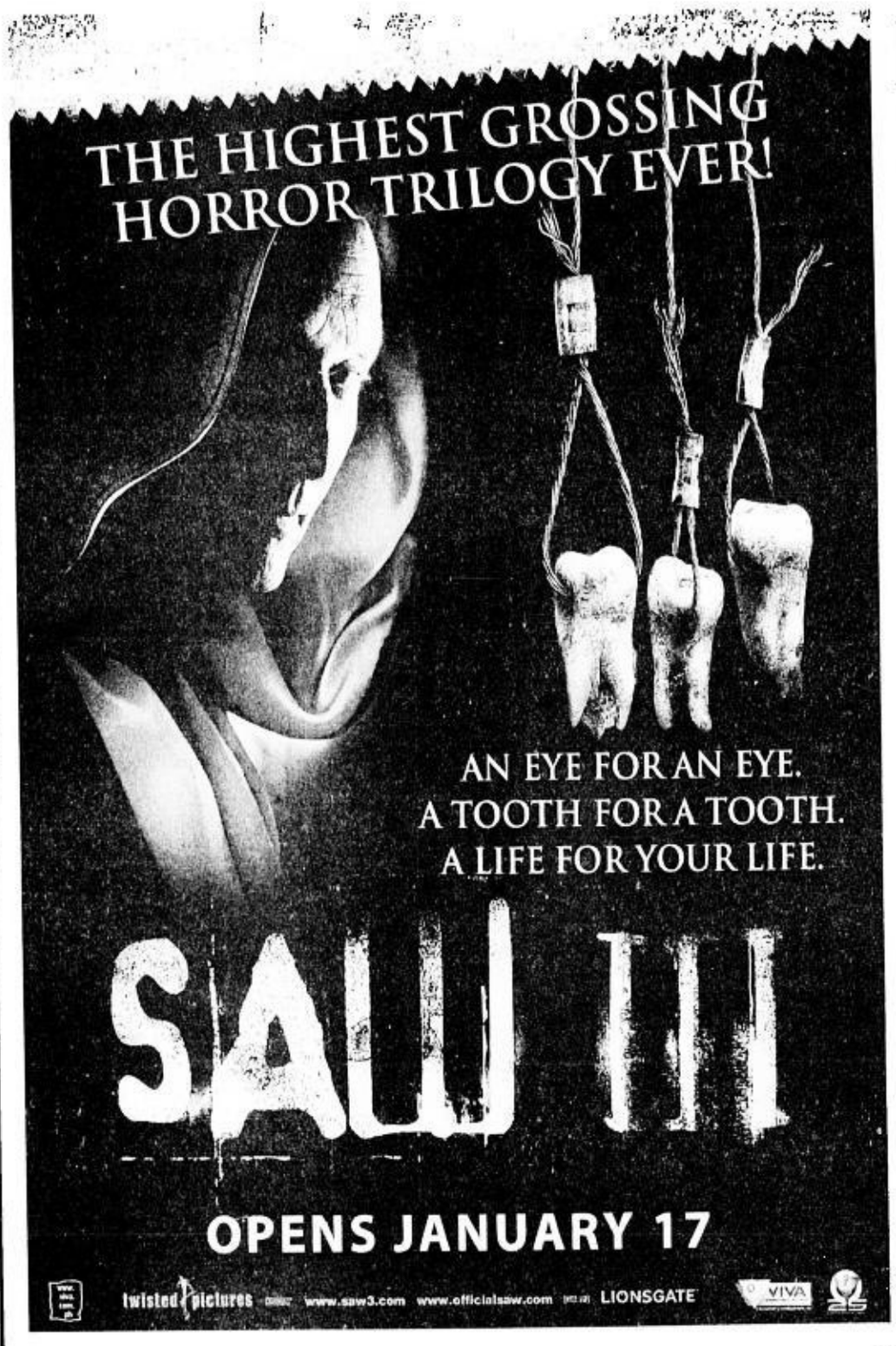
January 13

The Lettermen at Clark Expo in Pampanga; 8 p.m.

January 14

The Lettermen at St. La Salle in Bacolod; 8 p.m.

Oliver Salonga at UP Abelardo Hall; 4 p.m. Call 724-0705.



To the dungeon, dragon movie!

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

REVIEW

SATURATED IN COMPETENT enough special effects, the fantasy epic "Eragon" is easy to watch, but it's mostly a derivative and antiseptic adventure that has nothing new to say about heroism. The boundary between good and evil characters is apparent early on, but they seriously lack traits that viewers can latch on to, and ultimately connect with. Say what you will about Lucas' "Star Wars," or even Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings," but the authors of those mythic sagas managed to create at least a handful of distinguishable and motivated figures that stood out in a deluge of forgettable backdrop characters.

"Eragon" doesn't quite have those. The gradual transformation of a humble young man, Eragon (Ed Speelers), who discovers his destiny and role in the scheme of things, feels too much like the heroic coming-of-age journeys in the aforementioned movies. Eragon discovers a mysterious egg and instantly connects with the telepathic creature soon after it hatches. With his now-grownup dragon, Saphira (voiced by Rachel Weisz), he goes on a quest to defeat an old dragon rider, the treacherous Galbatorix (John Malkovich) and his army of unrelenting evildoers. The young hero must find allies, or Galbatorix will conquer all freedom-loving tribes.

What, no flashbacks?

How Darth Vader-ish, but not really; the villains here barely register as individuals because they're just echoing each other's despotic-madman lines. Robert Carlyle as the undead wizard henchman is a little more intimidating, though, even if he acts like a campy cross between "LotR" characters Saruman and Wormtongue. In contrast, Jeremy Iron's unfortunate character Brom feels like a watered-down Obi-Wan Kenobi or Gandalf, a mentor-figure who knows the past, but this particular sage doesn't radiate a sense of importance. Sadly, the aura of expendability is shared by the rest of the characters.

Originally a hit children's book authored by Christopher Paolini, "Eragon" has virtuous warriors who wish to be free of the taint posed by the villains of the land. The unbridled idealism is repeated throughout the film, but you just have to wonder how terrible their enemies are, as we're shown very brief glimpses of their supposed despicable nature. The same goes for the "rebel" group; it's hard to feel for them because there isn't any strong rundown on who these extra characters are.

Flashbacks would have been useful. Important bits of information about the past (and even the future) are only told, but unconvincingly. This makes "Eragon" hard to swallow—we're bombarded with digitally adorned battle scenes that are bloodless and lacking in any real consequence. The costumes look amazing; the climactic aerial showdown between two dragons looks good; even the cast of actors is well-picked. But they're better seen than heard, as the film is devoid of original lines, necessary intrigue and deeper meaning.

Celine Dion's Vegas show to close in December

LAS VEGAS—CELINE DION'S LAS VEGAS concert extravaganza at Caesars Palace will close on Dec. 15 after a nearly five-year run.

"As we prepare ourselves to say goodbye, I know this will be the best year yet," Dion said in a statement Thursday outlining production changes for the show's final year.

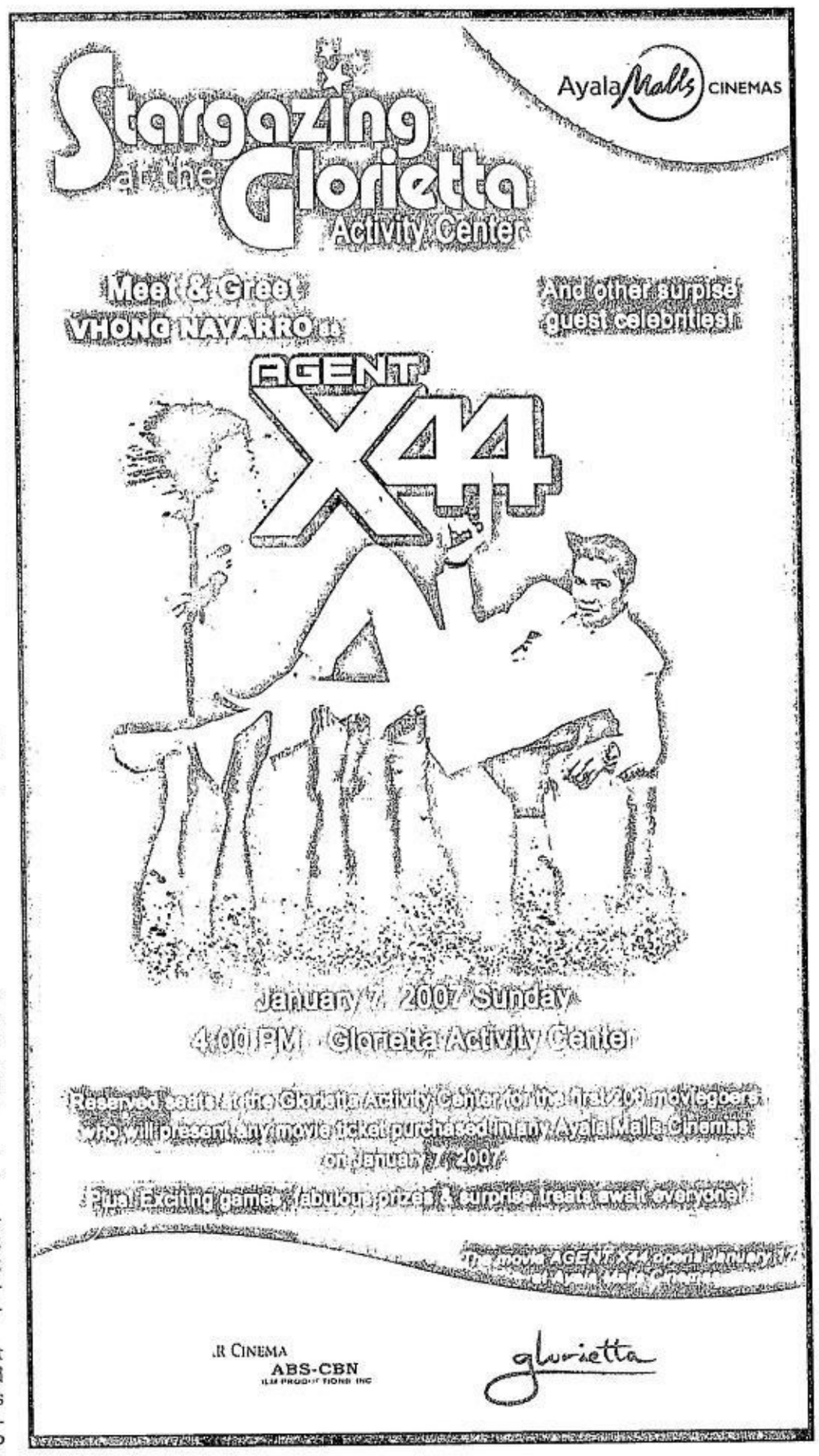
The Grammy award-winning singer, who signed a three-year $100 million contract, started the splashy gig titled "A New Day" in March 2003. The run was later extended through 2007. A closing date had not been previously announced.

Producers say nearly 2.5 million people have seen Dion's show since it opened in the Colosseum, a $95-million theater built and designed for the production.

The final year of the show will include new costumes and new numbers. In late January, "A New Day" will be filmed for a TV special and DVD, producers said.

The final block of tickets for performances from August through December will go on sale on March 1.

Caesars has not announced Dion's replacement. *AP*



'Babel,' 'Dreamgirls,' 'Sunshine' lead Oscar bets with 3 nods each

LOS ANGELES—THE ENSEMBLE drama "Babel," the musical "Dreamgirls" and the road-trip tale "Little Miss Sunshine" each earned three nominations Thursday for the Screen Actors Guild Awards. Leonardo DiCaprio and Helen Mirren both had two nominations.

Mirren was nominated for playing both of England's two Queen Elizabeths, as Best Actress in a Film as the current monarch in "The Queen" and as Best Actress in a TV movie or Miniseries for playing her 16th-century predecessor in "Elizabeth I."

DiCaprio had a lead-actor film nomination as a mercenary hunting a rare gem in the African adventure "Blood Diamond" and a supporting-actor nomination as a cop undercover in a Boston crime gang in "The Departed." At the upcoming Golden Globes, DiCaprio was nominated as lead actor for both films, but under SAG rules, he was entered in different categories.

"Dreamgirls" grabbed supporting nominations for Eddie Murphy and Jennifer Hudson. The film also had a slot in the category for Best Overall Acting Ensemble, which includes Jamie Foxx and Beyonce Knowles.

Other ensemble nominees were "Babel," the Robert Kennedy assassination drama "Bobby," "The Departed" and "Little Miss Sunshine."

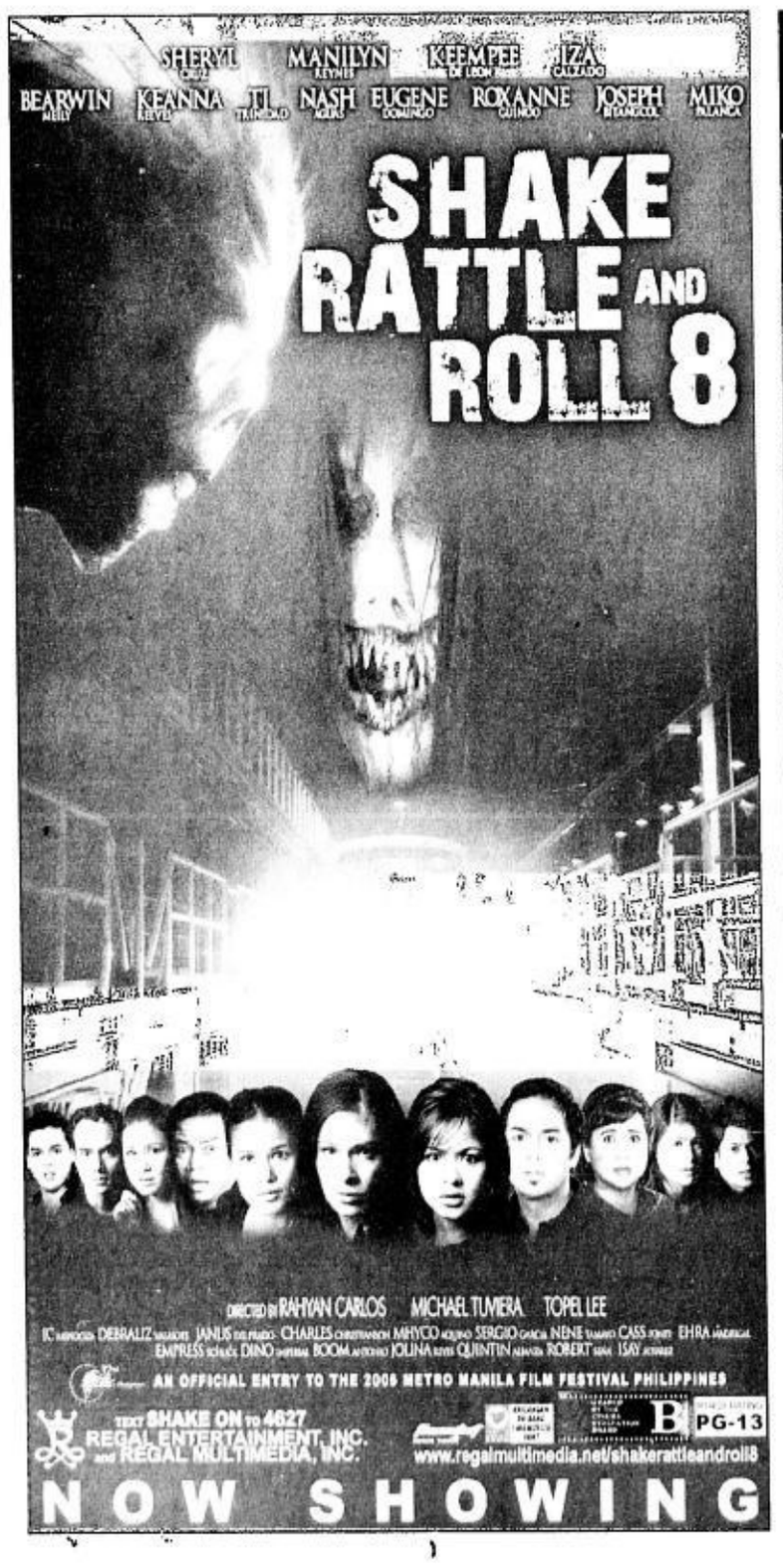
Along with Mirren, other likely Oscar favorites and nominees dominated the guild choices, including Forest Whitaker as Ugandan dictator Idi Amin in "The Last King of Scotland" and Peter O'Toole as an aging actor in "Venus."

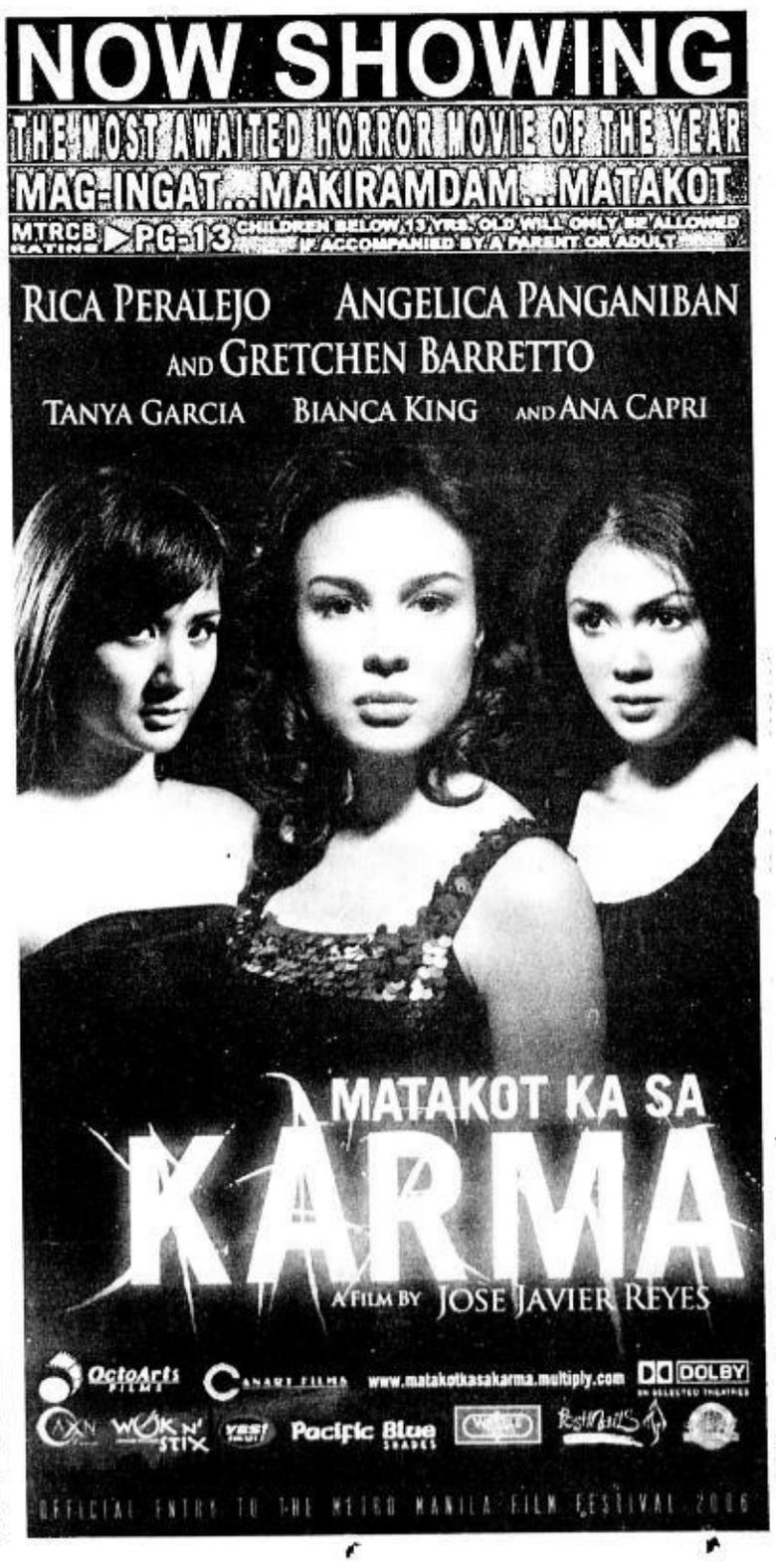
Surprise nominees, included Ryan Gosling for lead actor as a teacher with a drug problem in the little-seen drama "Half Nelson" and child actor Abigail Breslin for Supporting Actress as a 7-year-old obsessed with competing in beauty pageants in "Little Miss Sunshine."

Will Smith rounded out the lead-actor field as a homeless dad in "The Pursuit of Happyness."

Joining Mirren for lead-actress nominations were Penelope Cruz in "Volver"; Judi Dench in "Notes on a Scandal"; Meryl Streep in "The Devil Wears Prada"; and Kate Winslet in "Little Children."

The guild picks are one of the last major announcements in Hollywood awards season before Academy Awards nominations come out Jan. 23. The Oscars will be presented Feb. 25. *AP*





MARAMING SALAMAT, MGA KAPUSO...

SA INYONG WALANG PATID NA PAGTANGKILIK!

Sa kabila ng kakaiba at 'di maipaliwanag na cable ratings ng kabila, lalo na sa 4th quarter, ay patuloy pa rin tayong nangunguna!

JAN - DEC 2006 OVERALL CHANNEL RATINGS

Mega Manila TV Households TOTAL DAY (6am-12mn)

GMA	17.6
ABS-CBN	13.4
DIFF (GMA-ABS)	4.2

4th QUARTER 2006 OVERALL CHANNEL RATINGS

Mega Manila TV Households

Total day (6am - 12mn)	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
GMA	16.2	17.2	16.9
ABS-CBN	14.1	15.4	13.4
DIFF (GMA-ABS)	2.1	1.8	3.5

14 OUT OF THE TOP 20 PROGRAMS ARE ON GMA

Mega Manila TV Households DECEMBER 2006

RANK	PROGRAM	CHANNEL	RATING %
1	CAPTAIN BARBELL	GMA	30.3
2	BAKEKANG	GMA	29.1
3	24 ORAS	GMA	28.7
4	ATLANTIKA	GMA	28.6
5	KAPAMILYA DEAL OR NO DEAL	ABS-CBN	27.3
6	IMBESTIGADOR	GMA	26.4
7	SUPER INGGO	ABS-CBN	26.1
8	KAPUSO MO, JESSICA SOHO	GMA	25.7
9	A ROSY LIFE	GMA	25.7
10	MAGING SINO KA MAN	ABS-CBN	25.4
11	STARSTRUCK THE NEXT LEVEL	GMA	23.0
12	BITOY'S FUNNIEST VIDEOS YARI KA!	GMA	22.9
13	TV PATROL WORLD (Mon - Sun)	ABS-CBN	22.8
14	PINOY POP SUPERSTAR YEAR 3	GMA	22.7
15	MAGPAKAILANMAN	GMA	22.7
16	EAT BULAGA	GMA	22.2
17	MEL & JOEY	GMA	21.2
18	ALL STAR K!	GMA	21.1
19	MAALAALA MO KAYA	ABS-CBN	20.7
20	KOMIKS	ABS-CBN	19.9

Dahil kayo ang aming inspirasyon , pinagbubuti po namin ang paghahatid ng mga programang inyong pananabikan, susubaybayan at pagkakatiwalaan.

ABANGAN ANG MGA BAGO AT NAGGAGANDAHANG PROGRAMANG SUNOD-SUNOD NAMING IHAHANDOG SA INYO.

GMA

Kapuso ng bawat Pilipino

SOURCE: AGB Nielsen Media Research Phils., Inc. (Arianna)
January - December 2006

Philippine Daily Inquirer Sunday
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SUNDAY, JANUARY 7, 2007 E

PAMPANGA II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
GUAGUA, PAMPANGA

January 4, 2007

INVITATION TO BID

PAMPANGA II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE,-INC. (PELCO II) WITH OFFICE ADDRESS AT SAN ROQUE, GUAGUA, PAMPANGA IS PRESENTLY IN NEED OF THIRTY SEVEN (37) STRONG SECURITY GUARDS FROM A LICENSED SECURITY AGENCY.

Interested Parties are therefore invited to attend the **Pre-Bid Conference on January 11, 2007 at 10:30 A.M.** to be held at Pelco II Board Room, San Roque, Guagua, Pampanga, to discuss details of the bid. **Security Agency who should fail to attend the pre-bid conference shall be disqualified in the bidding proper.**

SUBMISSION AND OPENING OF BIDS SHALL BE HELD ON JANUARY 18, 2007 AT 10:30 A.M. SHARP AT THE PELCO II BOARD ROOM, SAN ROQUE, GUAGUA, PAMPANGA. HENCE, LATE COMERS SHALL NOT BE HONORED BY THE PBAC. ONLY ACCREDITED AGENCIES SHALL BE HONORED IN THE BIDDING. THEREFORE, ALL SECURITY AGENCIES WHO ARE NOT DULY ACCREDITED BY THIS OFFICE ARE REQUIRED TO SUBMIT THE NECESSARY DOCUMENTS AND PAY THE AMOUNT OF ONE THOUSAND (P1,000.00) PESOS AS ACCREDITATION FEE. FOR FURTHER CLARIFICATION, PLEASE CONTACT OR VISIT ENGR. RAUL L. CANLAS, CHAIRMAN OF THE PBAC, CELPHONE NO. 0920-918-5464 OR LANDLINE TEL. # (045) 900-2650.

Accreditation Requirements:

1. Business Registration Certificate from the Securities & Exchange Commission (SEC)
2. Security Agency License from PNP-SAGSD
3. Membership Certificate from PADPAO
4. Company's Profile
   a. No. of Licensed Working Security Guards
   b. List of past and existing clients (Please indicate the name, address, contact nos. and no. of security guards)
   c. Other valid information of the Security Agency
5. Latest Income Tax Return for three (3) years
6. Audited Financial Statement for three (3) years

(Sgd.) ENGR. RAUL L. CANLAS
PBAC Chairperson

Noted by:

(Sgd.) MR. SULPICIO C. LAGARDE, JR.
General Manager

(PDI - Jan. 5 & 7, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
Municipality of Hagonoy, Davao del Sur

INVITATION FOR BIDS
(CONSTRUCTION OF HAGONOY PUBLIC MARKET)

(The Works Include the Construction of 2 Buildings with Comfort Rooms and Waste Control Facilities)

Loan No. 1843-PHI

1. The Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank toward the cost of the Mindanao Basic Urban Services Sector Project (MBUSSP), and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this loan, together with the GOP counterpart funds, to payments under the contract for Construction of the Hagonoy Public Market.
2. The *Municipal Government of Hagonoy* now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for the Construction of Hagonoy Public Market. The works include construction of 2 Buildings with Comfort Rooms and Waste Control Facilities. Completion of the Works is required by 131 calendar days.
3. Bidding will be conducted in accordance with relevant procedures for open competitive bidding as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," to the extent it is consistent with Asian Development Bank's procurement procedures and is open to all Bidders from eligible source countries as defined in *"Guidelines for Procurement Under Asian Development Bank Loans."*
4. The documents required in the Eligibility Documents shall be submitted as part of the Technical Documents of the Bidders as provided in the Instructions to Bidders.
5. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from The Secretariat, Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), Municipality of Hagonoy, Davao del Sur and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM on January 8, 2007 to February 5, 2007.
6. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Ten Thousand Pesos (Php10,000.00) only. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the bidder or his authorized representative on or before 5:00 PM of February 5, 2007.
7. The Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), Municipality of Hagonoy, Davao del Sur will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all eligible Bidders on January 22, 2007 at 1:00 PM. At ABC Hall, Hagonoy, Davao del Sur.
8. Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids at the address below on or before February 6, 2007 at 1:00 PM. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of Bank Guarantee and in an amount of One Hundred Sixty-Five Pesos (Php 165,000.00) or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bids will be opened on February 6, 2007 at 1:00 PM at ABC Hall, Poblacion, Hagonoy, Davao del Sur in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend the bid opening.
9. To be considered eligible and qualified a Bidder must:
   a. have a successful experience as prime contractor in the construction of at least one (1) work of a nature and complexity equivalent to the Works in the last five (5) years, such being verifiable from completion certificates. To comply with this requirement the single contract cited should be at least Php 5,300,000.00
   b. have a minimum average annual construction turnover over the last three (3) years equal to Php 6.60M
   c. submit audited balance sheets or, if not required by the law of the applicants country, other financial statements acceptable to the Procuring Entity, for the last five (5) years to demonstrate the current soundness of the applicants financial position and its prospective long-term profitability.
10. Completion of the Works is required by 131 Calendar Days from the start of construction.
11. The Municipal Government of Hagonoy, Davao del Sur reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

OFFICE OF THE BAC CHAIRMAN
Attention: ENGR. JANIRI N. NUÑAL
MUNICIPAL HALL
POBLACION, HAGONOY
DAVAO DEL SUR
CONTACT NUMBER: 09263971244

(Sgd.) ENGR. JANIRI N. NUÑAL
BAC Chairman

(PDI–Jan. 7 & 14, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
A. Francisco Gold Condominium II, EDSA
cor. Mapagmahal St., Diliman, Quezon City
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

The DILG through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites service contractors to apply for eligibility and to Bid for the hereunder project:

NAME OF PROJECT	Provision of Janitorial and Sanitation Services for the Calendar Year 2007 for the Department of the Interior and Local Government located at A. Francisco Gold Condominium II, EDSA corner Mapagmahal Street, Diliman, Quezon City
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	Php 6,300,000.00
Contract Duration	April 1 – December 31, 2007

Prospective bidders should have experience in similar undertakings for at least three (3) years and should have key personnel and equipment (owned, leased or under purchase) available for the prosecution of the project. The Eligibility Check / Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

Criteria for the eligibility check of the prospective bidders, examination and evaluation of bids and post-qualification and all matters relevant to this procurement shall be in accordance with Republic Act No. 9184 (The Government Procurement Reform Act) and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

The complete schedule of activities is listed as follows:

Issuance of Bid Documents	– January 8-14, 2007
Pre-Bid Conference	– January 18, 2007
Submission / Opening / Evaluation of Bids	– January 30, 2007
Post qualification	– February 6, 2007
Notice of Award	– February 13, 2007

Bid documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Six Thousand Pesos (Php 6,000.00) only to the DILG Cashier.

The complete set of Eligibility Requirements and Bid Documents may be obtained at the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) – Secretariat c/o Mr. Reynaldo Bungubung, BAC Secretariat Head (Telephone No. 9266256). Eligibility Documents, Technical and Financial Proposals shall be placed in a separate and marked sealed envelope addressed to ASEC AUSTERE A. PANADERO, Bids and Awards Committee, Chairman, c/o BAC-Secretariat and dropped in the bid box located at the OSEC Conference room, 10th Floor A. Francisco Gold Condominium II, EDSA corner Mapagmahal Street, Diliman, Quezon City. Deadline of Submission and receipt of Eligibility, Technical and Financial requirements shall be on January 30, 2007 at the OSEC Conference Room.

The DILG reserves the right to reject any or all bids or offers which it may consider to be disadvantageous and not beneficial to DILG or waive any defect or informality therein. Further, the DILG assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

(Sgd.) AUSTERE A. PANADERO
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – January 7, 2007)

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Republic of the Philippines
Province of Zamboanga del Sur
Municipality of Margosatubig

Invitation for Bids (IFB)

Date: January 7, 2007
Contract ID No.: SP-115-IN-01
World Bank Loan No: 4446 PH

1. The Government of the Philippines has received a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development towards the cost of Local Government Finance and Development and intends to apply part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the Contract for the *Improvement and Expansion of Level III Water Supply System.* Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the *Guidelines: Procurement under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits.*
2. The *Municipality of Margosatubig, Zamboanga del Sur* invites sealed bids from eligible sources for the *development of spring sources, construction of intake boxes, storage reservoir and treatment facilities, laying of new transmission and distribution facilities and installation of service connections and meters.*
3. Bidding documents may be purchased starting *January 9, 2007 at the BAC Secretariat, at the Office of the Municipal Planning and Development Coordinator, Margosatubig, Zamboanga del Sur* upon payment of a non-refundable fee of *Five Thousand Pesos (Php 5,000.00)* or its equivalent in a freely-convertible currency, for each package. Interested bidders may obtain further information at the same address.
4. Bids shall be valid for a period of *ninety (90) days* after bid opening and must be accompanied by bid security of *Five Hundred Thirty Three Thousand Pesos (Php 533,000.00)* in a form of cash, certified check, bank guarantee or its equivalent in a convertible currency and shall be delivered to the *BAC Secretariat, at the Office of the Municipal Planning and Development Coordinator, Margosatubig, Zamboanga del Sur on or before 10:00 A.M. of February 13, 2007* at which time they will be opened in the presence of the bidders who wish to attend.
5. The Bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine its responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during post qualification. The *Estimated Project Cost* for the subproject is *Php 21,330,000.00.*
6. A pre-bid conference will be held at *10:00 A.M. on January 31, 2007 at the SB Session Hall, Local Government Compound, Margosatubig, Zamboanga del Sur.*

(Sgd.) ELVIRA Z. EMIA
BAC Chairman

(PDI – January 7, 2007)

PETRON
Needs

SERVICE STATION DEALERS
for

Locations	Required Cash Capital	Deadline for Submission of Application
1. Km. 21, McArthur Highway Brgy. Ibayo, Marilao, Bulacan	P2.0 M	01/12/07
2. Dalahican Road, cor. Maharlika Highway, Ibabang Dupay, Lucena City, Quezon	P2.0 M	01/12/07
3. Tagpuan sa Villa Escudero, Maharlika Highway, Bgy. Lalig, Tiaong, Quezon	P6.0 M	01/15/07
4. Canlalay, Biñan, Laguna	P5.0 M	01/31/07
5. Solano, Nueva Vizcaya	P5.0 M	01/31/07
6. Governor's Drive, Dasmariñas, Cavite	P2.0 M	02/02/07
7. Regalado Avenue, Quezon City	P2.0 M	02/02/07
8. Link Road, Sucat, Parañaque City	P2.0 M	02/02/07
9. Alabang-Zapote Road, Las Piñas City	P2.0 M	02/02/07

Note: Above capital requirement needed for actual station operation; No up-front money is given to Petron.

Only applicants who can meet the following "MUST" requirements need apply:

a. Must be able to put up required capitalization;
b. Must be able to operate and run the station on full time basis;
c. Must not be an existing dealer of any other oil company.

Preference shall be given to applicants residing near the station being applied for. Previous applicants need not apply.

Please secure your application forms from Luzon Reseller, Petron Corporation, Jesus St., Pandacan, Manila c/o Ms. Rosette P. Sanchez at tel. 563-8521 Loc. 282. Submit application forms not later than the deadline specified for each location.

(PDI–Jan. 7, 2007)

FOR IMMEDIATE HIRING

FOR FEMALE APPLICANTS
ROVING SUPERVISORS
ADMIN ASSISTANT
HR ASSISTANT
SECRETARY-ENCODERS
ACCOUNTING STAFF
GRADUATE in RESPECTIVE FIELD
PROFICIENT IN COMPUTER

FOR MALE APPLICANTS
DELIVERY VAN DRIVERS
WE GIVE GOOD COMPENSATION TO COMPETENT, HARD WORKING AND DEDICATED PEOPLE.

PLEASE APPLY IN PERSON AT:
158 P. SEVILLA ST., BET. 6TH & 7TH AVES., GRACE PARK, CALOOCAN CITY
BRING RESUMÉ w/ 2x2 COLORED PHOTO, NBI CLEARANCE

WEST VISAYAS STATE UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER
Jaro, Iloilo City, Philippines
Tel. No. 3202431 local 101
Fax No. (033) 3202623
Email address: umchd@nfo.com.ph
"PHIC Accredited Health Care Provider"

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The WEST VISAYAS STATE UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER invites bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following items:

Item/Description	Approved Budget for the Contract	Date/Time: Pre-Bid Conference	Date/Time: Deadline/ Opening of Bids	Price of Bid Documents (non-refundable	End User
1. Supply and Delivery of Standard Medical Oxygen, Medical Compressed Air, Medical Flask Portable Oxygen, etc.	P 7,773,686.00	Jan. 22, 2007 2 PM Conference Room-Ground Floor	Feb. 5, 2007 2 PM Conference Room-Ground Floor	P 5,000.00	Nursing Service Office/ PPMDO

The Bid documents shall be available at the West Visayas State University Medical Center Supply Office starting January 15 to January 20, 2007 upon payment of non-refundable fee indicated above.

The Pre-Bid conference shall be held at West Visayas State University Medical Center Conference Room-Ground Floor, E. Lopez St., Jaro, Iloilo City.

The value of the prospective bidder's largest single contract completed within the last three (3) years and similar to the contract to be bid, must be at least fifty percent (50%) of the approved budget for the contract to be bid.

The bidders shall submit their duly accomplished eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals in three separate sealed envelopes at the above mentioned address.

For more information, please call the West Visayas State University Medical Center Supply Office at telephone numbers (033) 320-2431 to 38 local 223.

West Visayas State University Medical Center reserves the right to to waive any formality in the responses to the eligibility requirements and to this invitation. West Visayas State University Medical Center further reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) ANNA VICTORIA J. SOMBONG, M.D.
BAC Chairman

(PDI – January 7, 2007)

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DANG - 0919-6675754

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722-1144 or 722-1155

INVITATION TO BID
"AS IS WHERE IS"
DAMAGED MOTOR VEHICLES

1996 MITS. L-300 VERSA VAN
1997 NISSAN CEFIRO USM-474
1990 ISUZU FORWARD TRUCK RAD-237
1996 HONDA CIVIC LXI UNL-319

For particulars, call 812-4520

(PDI-Jan 7, 2007)

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ADJOINING PHILCREST LAND'S WAREHOUSE
AREA: 21,811 SQ.M.
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SOUTH SUPERHIGHWAY
P15,000/SQ.M. NEGOTIABLE
CASH OR TERMS
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0916-5946279

Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Manila

GUIDELINES ON THE FILING OF PRESENT CERTIFICATES OF CANDIDACY AND NOMINATION OF OFFICIAL CANDIDATES OF REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTIES IN CONNECTION WITH THE MAY 14, 2007 SYNCHRONIZED NATIONAL AND LOCAL ELECTIONS.

ABALOS, Benjamin, S.	Chairman
BORRA, Resurreccion, Z.	Commissioner
TUASON, Florentino, Jr. A	Commissioner
BRAWNER, Romeo A.	Commissioner
SARMIENTO, Rene V.	Commissioner
FERRER, Nicodemo T.	Commissioner

x----------x

Promulgated: 5 January 2007

RESOLUTION NO. 7799

The Commission on Elections, by virtue of the powers vested in it by the Constitution, the Omnibus election Code, and other election laws, RESOLVED to promulgate as it hereby promulgates, the following rules and guidelines on the filing of certificates of candidacy and nomination of official candidates of registered political parties in connection with the May 14, 2007 synchronized National and Local Elections.

SECTION 1. ***Certificate of Candidacy.*** – a) No person shall be elected Senator, Member of the House of Representatives, Provincial, City or Municipal official unless he files a sworn certificate of candidacy in the form prescribed by the Commission and within the period fixed herein.

b) No person shall be eligible for more than one office in the same election. If he files a certificate of candidacy for more than one office he shall not be eligible for any of them. However, before the expiration of the period for the filing of certificate of candidacy, the person who has filed more than one certificate of candidacy may declare under oath the office for which he desires to be eligible and cancel the certificate of candidacy for the other office or offices. Said declaration shall be filed personally or through his duly authorized representative with the proper office in accordance with Sec. 3 hereof.

c) A person who has filed a certificate of candidacy may, prior to the election, withdraw the same pursuant to Section 13 hereof.

d) The filing or withdrawal of a certificate of candidacy shall not affect whatever civil, criminal or administrative liabilities which a candidate may have incurred.

SEC. 2. ***Contents of certificate of candidacy.*** – The certificate of candidacy shall be under oath and shall state that the person filing it is announcing his candidacy for the office and constituency stated therein; that he is eligible for said office, his age, gender, civil status, place and date of birth, his citizenship, whether natural-born or naturalized; the registered political party to which he belongs; if married, the full name of the spouse; his legal residence, giving the exact address, the precinct number, barangay, city or municipality and province where he is a registered voter; his post office address for election purposes; his profession or occupation or employment; that he is not a permanent resident of or an immigrant to a foreign county; that he will support and defend the Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines and will maintain true faith and allegiance thereto; that he will obey the laws, legal orders, decrees, resolution, rules and regulations promulgated and issued by the duly-constituted authorities; that he assumes the foregoing obligations voluntarily without mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that the facts stated in the certificate are true and correct to the best of his own knowledge.

Unless a candidate has officially changed his name through a court-approved proceeding, a candidate shall use in a certificate of candidacy the name by which he has been baptized or if he has not been baptized in any church or religion, the name registered in the office of the local civil registrar or any other name under the provisions of existing law or, in the case of a Muslin, his Hadji name after performing the prescribed religious pilgrimage; provided, that when there are two or more candidates for an office with the same name and surname, each candidate, upon being made aware of such fact, shall state his paternal and maternal surname, except the incumbent who may continue to use the name and surname stated in his certificate of candidacy when he was elected.

The person filing the certificate of candidacy may include one nickname or stage name by which he is generally or popularly known in the locally; Provided: That no candidate shall use the nickname, stage name or initials of another. In case of several nicknames or stage names, only the nickname or stage name first written shall be considered.

Titles, such as DON, DATU, DOCTOR, GINOO, or words of similar imports shall not be allowed.

He shall affix his signature, thumbmark and his latest passport-size photograph on the upper-right hand margin thereof; and if he so desires, a statement, in duplicate in not more than one hundred words, containing his bio-data and program of government.

SEC. 3. ***Where to file certificate of candidacy.*** – The certificate of candidacy shall be filed in FIVE (5) LEGIBLE COPIES with the offices of the Commission specified hereunder:

Elective Office	COMELEC Office where certificate shall be filed
Senator	Law Department
Member of the House of Representatives for legislative districts in theNational Capital Region (NCR)	Regional Election Director, NCR
Members of the House of Representatives of legislative districts in provinces Provincial officials	Provincial Election Supervisor
Members of the House of Representatives for legislative districts in cities outside the NCR which comprise one or more legislative districts For City Officials of cities with more than one election officer	City Election Officer concerned designated for the purpose by the Regional Election Director (Copies of the designation of Election Officer concerned shall immediately be submitted to the Law Department of the Commission)
For City/Municipal Officials	City/Municipal Election Officer concerned

The certificate of candidacy shall be filled by the candidate personally or by his duly authorized representative. No certificate of candidacy shall be filed or accepted by mail, telegram or facsimile. The authority of the authorized representative shall be in writing and under oath, and attached to the certificate of candidacy.

Certificate of candidacy not filed with the correct offices as enumerated above shall not be accepted.

The filing of the certificate of candidacy of a substitute candidate, in case of valid substitution, shall be filed in accordance with Section 14 hereof.

A sample form of the certificate of candidacy shall be distributed free of charge and no filing fee shall be imposed.

SEC. 4. ***Effects of Filing Certificates of Candidacy.*** – a) Any person holding a public appointive office or position including active members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and other officers and employees in government-owned or controlled corporations, shall be considered *ipso facto* resigned from his office upon the filing of his certificate of candidacy.

b) Any elective official, whether national or local, running for any office shall not be considered resigned upon the filing of his certificate of candidacy.

SEC. 5. ***Period for filing certificate of candidacy.*** – The certificate of candidacy shall be filed on regular days during office hours except on the last day, which shall be up to midnight, as follows:

(a) For Senator – January 15, 2007 to February 12, 2007; and

(b) For Local Officials (including Members of the House of Representatives) – January 15, 2007 to March 29, 2007.

No certificate of candidacy and/or party nomination shall be received after 12:00 o'clock midnight of the last day for filing certificate of candidacy, except in cases of proper and valid substitution under Section 14 hereof.

SEC. 6. ***Certificates of nomination of official candidates by the political party.*** – The certificate of nomination of registered political parties or coalitions of political parties of their official candidates shall be filed not later than the last day for filing of certificate of candidacy, duly signed and attested under oath by the party president, chairman, secretary-general or any other duly authorized officer. The nominee shall accept the nomination by affixing his signature in the space provided therein. If a candidate files his certificate of nomination after his certificate of candidacy has been filed, he shall attach a copy of the certificate of candidacy to his certificate of nomination.

For this purpose, all registered politacal parties shall submit to the Law Department not later than December 14, 2006, the authorized signatories to official nominations of their respective candidates.

No certificate of nomination or any amendment thereto shall be filed after the last day for filing of certificate of candidacy, except in case of valid substitution under Section 14 hereof.

No political party shall be allowed to nominate candidates more than the number required to be voted for in an elective position. If a political party nominates more than the number required to be voted for in an elective position, all of the nominations shall be denied due course by the Commission.

SEC. 7. Independent candidate. – A candidate who has not been nominated by a registered political party or its duly authorized representative, or whose nomination has not been submitted by a registered political party, or who accepts nominations from more than one registered political party, except in cases of coalitions of said political parties, or whose nomination has been denied due course by the Commission under Section 6 hereof, or whose nomination was filed after the last day of filing of certificates of candidacy, shall be considered an independent candidate.

SEC. 8. ***Ministerial duly of receiving and acknowledging receipt of certificates of candidacy/nomination; Recording.*** – The receiving officer as provided for in Section 3 hereof shall have the ministerial duty to receive and acknowledge receipt of the certificates of candidacy/nomination by registered political parties or coalition of political parties on or before the deadline for filing of certificates of candidacy, provided said certificates are under oath and in the form prescribed by the Commission. He shall stamp every copy of each certificate with the date and time of its receipt and affix his signature thereon. Thereafter, he shall enter in a record book, the following data, leaving no space between entries: (a) date and time of receipt of the certificates; (b) assigned consecutive number thereof; (c) full name of the candidate; (d) the office for which the candidate is running; (e) the political party to which the candidate belongs and/or which nominated him, if any; (f) the number of copies actually received; and (g) the name of the officer or employee who received the certificate.

Without delay, after 12:00 o'clock midnight of the last day for filing certificate of candidacy, the receiving official shall close the record book by placing a line immediately after the last entry and writing the word "closed". He shall then affix his signature below the word "closed" and indicate the date and exact time of closing.

SEC. 9. ***Watchers of candidates, political parties and accredited citizens' arms.*** – Any candidate, political party, accredited citizens' arm may appoint a watcher in connection with the filing and reception of the certificate of candidacy. The watcher shall be allowed to stay within the premises of the authorized receiving office and to take not of the proceedings but without or disturbing official business. Any watcher may report in writing to the Commission any irregularity, which may require appropriate action.

Watchers shall be entitled, upon written request, to secure from the receiving officer a copy of the full list of those who filed their certificates of candidacy and their respective positions.

SEC. 10. ***Reports on and delivery of certificate of candidacy.*** – On March 30, 2007, the receiving officer shall report, by rush telegram or any available fastest means of communication to the Law Department of the Commission, the complete list of candidates who have filed their certificates of candidacy as entered in the record book.

Within three (3) days from the last day for filing of certificates of candidacy, the record book containing the record of the certificates of candidacy/nomination received, list of candidates and all copies, except for one copy to be retained for file, of the certificates of candidacy/nomination filed with the offices as provided in Section 3 hereof, shall be delivered personally to the Law Department by the following:

1) Regional Election Director – For Member of the House of Representatives in the legislative districts in the NCR;
2) Provincial Election Supervisor – For Member of the House of Representatives and provincial, city and municipal positions outside the National Capital Region;

   For this purpose, the Election Officers concerned shall deliver the copies of certificate of candidacy/nomination for city and municipal positions to the PES within twenty-four (24) hours after the deadline for filing.
3) City/Municipal Election Officer – For city and municipal positions in the National Capital Region.

SEC. 11. ***Distribution of Certificates of Candidacy.*** – The Law Department shall distribute the copies of the certificate of candidacy, as follows:

First and second copies, to be retained by the Law Department, COMELEC, Manila;

Third copy, to ERSD, Comelec, Manila; and

Fourth copy, to the Office of the Comelec Secretary;

SEC. 12. – ***Preparation of the Certified List of Candidates.*** – Immediately after the last day for filing of certificates of candidacy, the certified list of candidates shall be prepared by election officials/department concerned as follows:

Position	Department/Official
Senator	Law Department
Member of the House of Representatives for legislative districts in the National Capital Region (NCR)	Regional Election Director
Members of the House of Representatives of legislative districts in provinces Provincial officials	Provincial Election Supervisor
For City/Municipal Officials	City/Municipal Election Officer

SEC. 13. ***Withdrawal of Certificate of Candidacy.*** – Any person who has filed a certificate of candidacy may at any time before election day file personally or his duly authorized representative, a statement of withdrawal under oath in five (5) legible copies with the office where the certificate of candidacy was filed. No statement of withdrawal shall be accepted by mail, telegram or facsimile.

The Regional Election Director, Provincial Election Supervisor, or the Election Officer concerned shall, upon receipt of the withdrawal, notify the Law Department by the fastest means of communication of the a) full name of the candidate withdrawing; b) elective office concerned; c) political party, if any; and d) substitution made, if any. On the same date, he shall retain a file copy and immediately forward to the Law Department all the other copies. The Law Department shall, in turn, distribute the copies to the offices/departments concerned as provided under Section 11 hereof.

For any withdrawal of candidacy and/or substitution filed with the Commission, the field office concerned shall be notified.

SEC. 14. ***Substitution of candidates, in case of death, disqualification or withdrawal of another.*** – If after the last day for the filing of certificate of candidacy, an official candidate of a registered political party dies, withdraws or is disqualified for any cause, only a person belonging to, and certified by, the same political party may file a certificate of candidacy to replace the candidate who died, withdrew or disqualified. No substitution shall be allowed for any independent candidate. The substitute for candidates who withdrew may file his certificate of candidacy as herein provided for the office affected not later than May 7, 2007. The substitute for candidates who were disqualified or died or suffered permanent incapacity may file his certificate of candidacy up to mid-day of election day. If the disqualification, death or permanent disability should occur between the day before the election and mid-day of election day, the substitute candidate may file the certificate with any board of election inspectors in the political subdivision where he is a candidate, or in the case of candidate for Senator, with the Law Department of the Commission.

No person who has withdrawn his candidacy for a position shall be eligible as substitute candidate for any other position after the deadline for filing of certificates of candidacy.

SEC. 15. ***Nuisance Candidates.*** – The Commission may, *motu propio*, or upon verified petition of an interested party, refuse to give due course to or cancel a certificate of candidacy if it is shown that said certificate has been filed to put the election process in mockery or disrepute, or to cause confusion among the voters by the similarity of names of registered candidates, or by other circumstances or acts which clearly demonstrate that the candidate has no *bona fide* intention to run for the office for which the certificate of candidacy has been filed and thus prevent a faithful determination of the true will of the electorate.

A verified petition to declare a duly registered candidate as a nuisance candidate shall be filed personally or through duly authorized representative with the Commission by any registered candidate within five (5) days from the last day for filing certificate of candidacy.

SEC. 16. ***Period to File Petitions to Deny Due Course to or Cancel a Certificate of Candidacy.*** – A verified petition seeking to deny due course to or cancel a certificate of candidacy may be filed by any person within five (5) days from the last day for the filing of certificate of candidacy but not later than twenty-five (25) days from the time of the filing of certificate of candidacy, exclusively on the ground of material misrepresentation on the contents of the certificate of candidacy as required under Section 74 of the Omnibus Election Code (*Batas Pambansa Blg. 881*).

SEC. 17. ***Effects of Disqualification.*** – Any candidate who has been declared disqualified by final judgment shall not be voted for and the votes cast in his favor shall not be counted. If, for any reason, he is not declared disqualified by final judgment before the election and he is voted for and receives the winning number of votes, the case shall continue and upon motion of the petitioner, complainant, or intervenor, the proclamation of such candidate may be ordered suspended during the pendency of the said case whenever the evidence of guilt is strong.

a) where a similar complaint/petition is filed before the election and before the proclamation of the respondent and the case is not resolved before the election, the trial and hearing of the case shall continue and referred to the Law Department for preliminary investigation.

b) where the complaint/petition is filed after the election and before the proclamation of the respondent, the trial and hearing of the case shall be suspended and referred to the Law Department for preliminary investigation.

In either case, if the evidence of guilt is strong, the Commission may order the suspension of the proclamation of respondent, and if proclaimed, to suspend the effects of proclamation.

SEC. 18. ***Effectivity*** . – This Resolution shall take effect on the seventh (7th) day after its publication in two (2) daily newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

SEC. 19. ***Dissemination.*** – The Education and Information Department shall cause the publication of this Resolution in two (2) daily newspapers of general circulation, give the same the widest dissemination possible and furnish copies thereof to all Regional Election Directors and Provincial Election Supervisors and accredited political parties and party-list organizations or coalitions participating in the party list system of representation.

BENJAMIN S. ABALOS, SR.
Chairman

RESURRECCION Z. BORRA
Commissioner

FLORENTINO A. TUASON, JR.
Commissioner

ROMEO A. BRAWNER
Commissioner

RENE V. SARMIENTO
Commissioner

NICODEMO T. FERRER
Commissioner

(PDI – Jan. 7, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Manila

RULES AND REGULATIONS ON LOCAL ABSENTEE VOTING IN CONNECTION WITH THE MAY 14, 2007 NATIONAL AND LOCAL ELECTIONS.

ABALOS, Benjamin, S.	Chairman
BORRA, Resurreccion, Z.	Commissioner
TUASON, Florentino, Jr. A	Commissioner
BRAWNER, Romeo A.	Commissioner
SARMIENTO, Rene V.	Commissioner
FERRER, Nicodemo T.	Commissioner

x----------x

Promulgated: 5 January 2007

RESOLUTION NO. 7797

The Commission on Elections, pursuant to the powers vested in it by the Constitution, the Omnibus Election code, **Republic Act No. 6646,** Republic Act No. 7166, Executive Order No. 157 and other pertinent election laws, RESOLVED to promulgate, as it hereby promulgates, the following rules and regulations on local absentee voting.

SECTION 1. ***Local absentee voting, defined.*** – Local absentee voting, as provided for under Executive Order No. 157 and Republic Act No. 7166, refers to a system of voting whereby government officials and employees, including members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), and the Philippine National Police (PNP), who are duly registered voters, are allowed to vote for the positions of President, Vice-President, Senators and Partly-List Representatives in places where they are not registered voters but where they are temporarily assigned to perform election duties on election day.

SECTION 2. ***Who are entitled to avail of local absentee voting.*** – Local abasentee voting shall be exercised by: a) government officials and employees; b) members of the AFP; and c) members of the PNP, who are duly registered voters and who, on election day, may temporarily be assigned to perform election duties in places where they are not registered voters.

Government officials and employees posted abroad to perform election duties on election day may also avail of local abasentee voting, provided, that they are registered voters under Republic Act No. 8189, otherwise known as "The Voter's Registration Act of 1996" and that they are not registered overseas absentee voters under Republic Act No. 9189, otherwise known as "The Overseas Absentee Voting Act of 2003".

SECTION 3. ***Date and place of voting.*** – Local absentee voters shall vote anytime from April 28 to April 30, 2007. for this purpose, the head of office/supervisor/commander shall disgnate the time and place of voting where the voters shall converge to vote.

SECTION 4. ***Positions to be voted for.*** – For purposes of the 2007 National and Local Elections, only the positions of Senators and Party-List Representatives shall be voted for under the local abasentee voting.

SECTION 5. ***Committee on Local Absentee Voting.*** – There shall be created a Committee on Local Absentee Voting ("Committee") composed of the following:

Chairman: Commissioner-In-Charge/Chairman of the Committee on Overseas Absentee Voting

Vice-Chairman: Director IV of the Electoral Contests Adjudication Department (ECAD)

Members:

(1) Director III, ECAD;
(2) Ranking lawyer of the Law Department,
(3) Executive Assistant V, Office of the CIC/ Chairman of the Committee, and
(4) Information Technology Officer III of the Information Technology Department

SECTION 6. ***Powers and Functions of the Committee*** – The Committee shall:

a) Supervise the implementation of the local absentee voting;
b) Receive applications for local absentee voting;
c) Verify whether the applicants are eligible for local absentee voting; Prepare lists of all approved applicantions for local absentee voting per office/unit/battallion;
d) Transmit to the concerned head of office/supervisor/commander the following:
   (i) List of approved applications for local absentee voting, and
   (ii) The exact number of local absentee ballots corresponding to the number of approved applications, inner and outer envelopes, and paper seals.
e) Receive and take custody, under proper receipt, the accomplished local absentee ballots and other related documents from the head of office, supervisor, commander;
f) Cause the delivery of the local absentee ballots contained in a ballot box immediately after the close of voting on May 14, 2007 to the Special Board of Election Inspectors (SBEI) for counting.
g) Supervise the counting of ballots and canvassing of votes;
h) Receive for safekeeping all ballot boxes containing the counted ballots and related election documents from the SBEIs and Special Board of Canvassers (SBOC) for local absentee voting.
i) Send to all City/municipal Election Officers (EOs) concerned, before elections, a written notice of the voters who will avail of the local absentee voting and, after elections, a written notice of the voters who actually voted under the system of local absentee voting.
j) Perform and exercise such other functions and powers as may be necessary for the proper implementation of the local absentee voting.

SECTION 7. ***Procedures for filing of application for local absentee voting.*** – (a) Not later than March 14, 2007, the head of office/ supervisor/commander concerned shall submit directly to the Committee the following:

i) A sworn request that he be provided with application forms for local abasentee voting; and

ii) A sworn list of registered voters under his supervision or command availing of the local absentee voting indicating therein the city/ municipality, barangay, precinct number where they are registered and the place of their assignment on election day, with a certification that the applicant/s will be re-assigned on election day to perform election-related duties.

Copies of the (1) Request for Application form/s for Local Absentee Voting, (2) Application for Local Absentee Voting and (3) List of Registered Voters Who Will Avail of Local Absentee Voting are hereto attached as Annexes "A", "B" and "C" and made integral parts of this Resolution.

b) Immediately upon receipt fo the sworn Request for Application Form and swon List of Registered Voters, the Committee shall issue sich number of application forms corresponding to the number of applicants to the head of office/supervisor/commander concerned or his duly authorized representative. The Committee shall keep a record of the different government offices/AFP units/AFP units/PNP stations to which the application forms were sent and the number of forms sent.

c) The head of office/supervisor/commander shall distribute the application forms to their respective personnel.

d) The accomplished application forms for local absentee voting shall be returned immediately by the applicant-voter to the head of office/ supervisor/commander who shall in turn transmit the same directly to the Committee, c/o The Electoral Contests Adjudication Department (ECAD), Commission on Elections, 8th Floor, Palacio del Gobernador, Intramuros, Manila, immediately upon receipt thereof but not later than March 21, 2007.

In all cases, the issuance, return and submission of the application forms shall be by the fastest means available.

SECTOPM 8. ***Verification of applicants for local absentee voting.*** – Upon receipt of the list of registered voters applying for local absentee voting from the head of office/supervisor/commander concerned, the Committee shall forward the list to the Information and Technology Department (ITD) of the Commission for verification from the national database of voters whther the applicants are registered voters. The ITD shall then report the result of the verification in writing to the Committee immediately thereafter.

Only the applications of those whose names are in the national data base of voters shall be approved by the Committee and shall be included in the list of applicants who are qualified to vote under the local absentee voting system.

The Committee shall send to all City/Municipal Eos concerned a written notice of the voters whose applications for absentee voting have been approved with a directive to indicate in the list of voters with voting records on the space opposite the names of the said absentee voters, the following annotation: **"voting thru local absentee voting"**, in order to prevent substitute voting.

SECTION 9. ***Transmittal of list of qualified local absentee voters, local absentee ballots and other election paraphernalia from the Committee.*** – The Committee shall tansmit immediately but not later than April 21, 2007, to the head of office/supervisor/commander concerned, the list of qualified local absentee voters, the exact number of local absentee ballots, inner and outer envelopes, and paper seals corresponding to the number of approved applications and thumbprint takers.

SECTION 10. ***Security envelopes for local absentee ballots.*** – There shall be two (2) security envelopes for each local absentee ballot, namely: an outer envelope which shall contain a serial number and an inner envelope. The outer envelope where the detached coupon shall be placed, shall contain space for the name of the voter and his voter's registration record number (VRRN).

The inner envelope where the accomplished ballot shall be placed, shall contain no other mark except an indication that it is a special envelope for a local absentee ballot.

SECTION 11. ***Distribution of local absentee ballots, envelopes and paper seals.*** – On any day from April 28 to 30, 2007, the head of office/ supervisor/commander concerned, shall distribute the local absentee ballots, inner and outer envelopes, and paper seals to the qualified local absentee voters. During the distribution, he shall:

a) Require each voter to affix his signature opposite his name in the list of qualified voters prepared by the Committee under Section 8 hereof;
b) Detach one ballot from the pad of ballots and retain the stubs where the serial number of each ballot appears;
c) Write the serial numbers of the ballot, outer envelope, and two (2) paper seals opposite the name of the voter in the list;
d) Give to the voter the ballot, inner and outer envelopes and two (2) paper seals; and
e) Instruct the voters to immediately accomplish the ballot in accordance with Section 12 hereof and return the same to him.

SECTION 12. ***Manner of voting.*** – The local absentee voter shall:

a) Fill up the ballot secretly;
b) Imprint his thumbmark on the proper space in the detachable coupon of the ballot;
c) Detach the coutpon from the ballot and place the same inside the outer envelope;
d) Place the accomplished ballot inside the inner envelope, close and seal the envelope with a paper seal;
e) Place the sealed inner envelope inside the outer envelope, which shall likewise be sealed with a paper seal;
f) Write his name on the space provided for in the outer envelope; and
g) Submit the sealed envelope to the head of office/supervisor/ commander.

SECTION 13. ***Transmittal of local absentee ballots and other election documents to the Committee.*** – The head of office/supervisor/ commander shall, after he has collected all the accomplished ballots from the local absentee voters, immediately transmit said ballots together with the list of qualified voters with signatures referred to in Secion 11(a) to the Committee by the fastest means available c/o The Electoral Contests Adjudicaiton Department, 8th Floor, Palacio del Governador, Intramuros, Manila, so that the ballots are received in the Commission not later than 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon of May 14, 2007. The head of office/supervisor/ commander concerned shall prepare in two (2) copies a transmittal letter containing a certification on the number of accomplished ballots collected by him. He shall submit to the Committee one (1) copy nd retian the other copy for his file.

Unused official ballots shall be torn in half at the end of the voting period and shall likewise be transmitted to the Committee.

After the elections, the Committee shall send to all City/Municipal EOs concerned a written notice of the voters who actually voted under the system of local absentee voting with a directive to indicate in the list of voters with voting records on the space opposite the names of the said absentee voters, the following annotation: **"voted thru local absentee voting"**, in order to prevent the deactivation of their registration records.

SECTION 14. ***Special Board of Election Inspectors.*** – The Commission may constitute as many SBEIs for local absentee voting as may be deemed necessary to count the local absentee ballots. The members thereof shall be chosen and appointed by the Chairman of the Committee from among the personnel of the Commission in the Main Office, Manila not later than April 30, 2007.

SECTION 15. ***Oath of members of SBEI.*** – Before assuming their office, the chairman and members of the SBEI shall take and sign an oath before any officer authorized to administer oaths. Copies of the oaths shall immediately be submitted to the Committee.

SECTION 16. ***Proceedings of the SBEI.*** – The SBEI shall meet in the designated office of the Commission, Intramuros, Manila at 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon of May 14, 2007 to count the votes cast by the local absentee voters and shall not adjourn until the counting is completed. All proceedings of the SBEI shall be public. It shall act through its chairman and all questions presented before it shall be decided without delay by a majority vote of the members. During its meetings, not more than one member shall be absent at a time, and in no case shall such absence be for more than twenty (20) minutes.

SECTION 17. ***Preliminaries to counting.*** – The Committee shall constitute a Reception and verification Unit which shall:

a) Receive the envelopes containing the accomplished absentee ballots and the list of local absentee voters prepared by the head of office/ supervisor/commander under Section 13 hereof.

b) Verify whether the number of envelopes containing the accomplished ballots is equal to the number of signatures affixed in the list submitted by the head of office/supervisor/commander concerned.

If there are more envelopes containing the accomplished ballot than the signatures affixed on the list, set aside the envelope of the voter whose signature does not appear in the list and place the same in a separate ballot box intended for the purpose. Such fact shall be indicated in a report to be submitted to the Committee. Said ballots shall not be counted.

If there are more signatures affixed in the list than the number of envelopes received, such fact shall likewise be indicated in the report to be submitted to the Committee. The report shall indicate the names of the voters whose signatures appear in the list but without corresponding envelopes. In this case, the Committee shall direct the head of office/supervisor/commander concerned to transmit the envelopes of said voters.

c) Place the envelopes containing the accomplished ballots inside ballot boxes at the rate of 400 ballots per ballot box.
d) Transmit to the Committee each ballot box immediately after 400 envelopes containing the accomplished ballots are deposited therein.

In all instances, the ballot boxes, prior to the submission to the Committee and distribution to the BEIs, should be stored in a safe and secured place.

At 3:00 pm of May 14, 2007, the Committee shall distribute one ballot box containing the local absentee ballots each to the SBEI for counting. Should there be a ballot box containing less than 300 envelopes, the Committee shall equitably distribute said envelopes to the SBEIs.

SECTION 18. ***Manner of counting local absentee ballots.*** – Upon receipt of the envelopes containing the local absentee ballots, the SBEI shall proceed with the counting as follows:

Before the counting:

a) Retrieve the special envelopes from the ballot box;
b) Open each outer envelope, retrieve the inner envelope and the detached coupon;
c) Place the coupons in the compartment for spoiled ballots of the ballot box;
d) Open the inner envelope and retrieve the ballot found therein;
e) Pile the ballots in bundles of one hundred (100) each;
f) The chairman of the SBEI shall take the ballots of the first pile one by one and read the names of the candidates voted for and the offices for which they were voted as well as the name of the party, organization or coalition voted for under the party-list system, in the order in which they appear thereon.

During the counting:

g) The chairman, the poll clerk and the third member shall position themselves in such a way as to give the watchers and the public an unimpeded view of the ballot being read by the chairman, as well as of the election returns and tally board being simultaneously accomplished by the poll clerk and the third member, respectively.
h) The watchers and the public shall not touch any of the said election documents. The table shall be cleared of all unnecessary writing paraphernalia. Any violation hereof shall constitute an election offense.
i) The poll clerk and the third member shall record simultaneously in the election returns and in the tally board, respectively, each vote as it is read. Each vote shall be recorded by a vertical line, except every fifth vote which shall be recorded by a diagonal line crossing the previous four vertical lines.
j) The same procedure shall be followed with the succeeding piles of ballots; and
k) The sub-total of votes in figures obtained by each candidate and party list candidates shall be recorded in the election return and tally board after each pile of 100 ballots are read.

After all the ballots have been read:

l) Record, in words and in figures, the total number of votes obtained by each candidate and by each party, organization or coalition participating under the party-list system, both in the election returns and in the tally board.
m) Close the entries by affixing their initials immediately after the last vote recorded or immediately after the name of the candidate and party-list candidates who did not receive any vote;
n) The poll clerk and the third member shall record in the election returns and in the tally board, respectively, the total number of votes obtained by each candidate and party-list candidates, in words and figures;
o) Accomplish the certification portion of the election returns and tally board;
p) Require the watchers if any, to affix their signature and imprint their thumbmarks on the right hand portion of the election returns and the tally board;
q) Ensure that the entries on the first copy of the election returns are clearly impressed on the other copies; and
r) Deposit the tally board in the ballot box compartment for valid ballots. The tally board as accomplished and certified by the SBEI shall not be changed or destroyed.

The proceedings of the SBEI shall be recorded in the Minutes of Counting, copies of which shall be sealed in separate envelopes to be distributed as follows:

a) The first copy, to the Election Records and Statistics Department; and
b) The second copy, to be deposited inside the compartment of the ballot box for valid ballots.

A copy of the Minutes of Counting is hereto attached as Annex "D".

SECTION 19. ***Election Returns*** – The election returns shall be prepared in seven (7) copies and distributed as follows:

a) The first copy to be submitted to the Special Board of Canvassers for local absentee voting;
b) The second copy, to the Commission to be submitted to the Election Records and Statistics Department (ERSD);
c) The third copy which is intended for the Provincial Board of Canvassers shall be submitted to the Chairman of the Committee;
d) The fourth copy to the dominant majority party as determined by the Commission;
e) The fifth copy to the dominant minority party determined by the Commission;
f) The sixth copy to the accredited citizens' arm of the Commission; and
g) The seventh copy to be deposited inside the compartment for valid ballots of the ballot box.

SECTION 20. ***Post counting procedure*** – Upon termination of the counting of votes, the SBEI shall:

a) Place the counted official absentee ballots in the envelope for counted ballots;
b) Seal the envelope with paper seal and affix their signatures on the said paper seal;
c) Deposit the envelope properly sealed inside the compartment for valid ballots of the ballot box;
d) Bundle the inner envelopes used for the filled-out ballots and deposit the same inside the compartment for valid ballots of the ballot box;
e) Place the seventh copy of the election returns inside the compartment for valid ballots;
f) Close the inner compartment of the ballot box, and lock and seal the same with one (1) fixed-length security seal and one (1) padlock;
g) Close the ballot box cover, and lock and seal the same with one (1) fixed-length security seal and three (3) padlock and padlocks;
h) Deliver the locked ballot box and the keys to the padlocks to the Committee for custody and safekeeping; and
i) Distribute the election returns in accordance with Section 19 hereof.

SECTION 21. ***Special Board of Canvassers*** – There is hereby constituted a Special Board of Canvassers (SBOC) for local absentee voting to be composed of ranking lawyers of the Commission, to be designated by the Chairman of the Committee.

SECTION 22. ***Notice of canvass*** – The chairman of the SBOC shall give notice of canvass to its members, senatorial candidates, political parties, organizations, associations, sectors or coalitions participating under the party-list system of the time, date and place of canvass at least five (5) days before May 14, 2007.

SECTION 23. ***Tabulation Group*** – The Board shall constitute a Tabulation Group which shall be under the direct supervision and control of the Board.

The Tabulation Group shall compute the subtotal of the Statement of Votes prepared by the Board. The names of each tabulator and the Statement of Votes assigned to them for tabulation shall be properly recorded in the minutes of the proceedings.

The tabulators shall affix their signatures above their printed names, and imprint their thumbmarks on the certification portion of the Statement of Votes.

SECTION 24. ***Meeting of the SBOC*** – The SBOC shall meet not later than 6:00 o'clock in the evening of May 14, 2007 in the designated office in the Commission, Intramuros, Manila, and proceed with the canvass of the election returns submitted to it by the SBEI's. it shall not adjourn until the canvass is completed.

SECTION 25. ***Certificate of Canvass*** – The SBOC shall prepare the Certificate of Canvass in six (6) copies for distribution as follows:

a) The first copy to the Commission, sitting as the National Board of Canvassers for use in the canvass of the election results for Senators and Party-List representatives;
b) The second copy to be retained by the chairman of the SBOC;
c) The third copy to the citizens' arm designated by the Commission to conduct a media-based unofficial count; and
d) The fourth, fifth, and sixth copies to the three (3) accredited major political parties.

SECTION 26. ***Watchers*** – In every meeting of the SBEI and the SBOC, each candidate for Senator, each duly registered political party, or coalition of political parties which has nominated candidates for Senator, sectors and organization participating under the party-list system, and one duly accredited citizens' arm of the Commission of national constituency, shall be entitled to appoint in writing two (2) watchers serving alternately.

Civic, religious, professional, business, youth and any other similar organizations with prior authority from the Commission, shall collectively be entitled to appoint two (2) common watchers serving alternately.

SECTION 27. *Applicability of Other Comelec Rules* – Rules and regulations promulgated by the Commission fro the 2007 National and Local Elections are herein adopted, incorporated and made integral parts of this resolution insofar as they are applicable and not inconsistent with the provisions hereof.

SECTION 28. *Effectivity* – This Resolution shall take effect after seven (7) days from its publication in two (2) daily newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

SECTION 29. *Dissemination* – Let the Education and Information Department, this Commission, cause the publication of this Resolution in two (2) daily newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines, and immediately furnish copies thereof to the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the Director General of the Philippine National Police and all deputized departments and agencies or instrumentalities of the national government and all field offices of the Commission.

SO ORDERED.

BENJAMIN S. ABALOS
Chairman

RESURRECCION Z. BORRA
Commissioner

FLORENTINO A. TUASON, JR.
Commissioner

ROMEO A. BRAWNER
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All interested applicants are requested to forward their credentials to JRatilla@Freshdelmonte.com on or before January 15, 2007. Those not meeting the above qualifications specific to this position are requested not to apply. No telephone follow-up will be entertained. Only short listed candidates will be notified for interview.

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AUCTION SALE

MARA PAWNSHOP BR of 2230 M. Roxas St. Sta Ana Manila Auction Sale on JAN. 12, 2007, Fri. at 2:30 in the afternoon. Respectively, AUG. 16 - SEPT. 12, 2007 SONS of J. LANUZA, Auctioneer. (PDI - January 7, 2007)

MARA PAWNSHOP
I, II, III, IV and Comembo Br. of Makati City. AUCTION SALE on JAN. 12, 2007 FRI. at 10:30, 11:00, 12:30, and 1:30 and 8:30 in the morning and on the afternoon, Respectively AUG. 16 - SEPT. 12, 2007.
Sons of J. Lanuza, Auctioneer (PDI - January 07, 2007)

SANTIAGO PAWNSHOP
Pob. Sta. Maria Bul. Unredeemed Pledges Expiring up to Dec. 31, 2006 8am Auctioneer: Atty. STA. A N A

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is given that the estate of late Fidel Mercado was extrajudially settled by sole heir as per Doc 160 Page 3 Book III Series 2006 before Notary Public Randy F Pablo of QC PDI - December 24 and 31,2006 and January 7, 2007

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the Public that the estate of the late Narcisa B. Alijera who died last Feb. 6, 2000 has been extrajudicially settled by way of an affidavit of self-adjudication by her sole heir Mr. Resurreccion D. Alijera, Jr. before the Notary Public Arnold Bayobay under his notarial seal identified as Doc No. 14 Page No. 3 Book No. XVII Series of 2006.
PDI-Dec 24&31,2006 &Jan 7,2007

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late SALVADOR J. SIBAYAN has been extrajudicially settled by his heirs as per Doc. 438 Page 88 Book V Series of 2006 by Notary Public Orlando R. Landingin, Jr of Quezon City (PDI-Dec. 24, 31, 2006 & Jan. 7, 2007)

NOTICE OF LOSS

Lost Passport w/ # LL965898 Issued On December 1, 2003 in Philippine Embassy Riyadh K.S.A. valid until December 1, 2008 Please Notify Mr. Rene J. Villasoto at mobile # 09194031602 or 8035463. Date Lost last December 10, 2006. (PDI-Jan. 7,2007)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT STOCK CERT. NO. 50872 WAS DECLARED LOST UNDER THE NAME OF MYRA S. SEVILLA. IF NO CONTEST RECEIVED, NEW CERT. WILL BE ISSUED. (JAN. 7, 14 & 21, 2007)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT STOCK CERTIFICATE NO.A0655961 AZ015602 B0253964 B0391270 ISSUED BY FIDELITY STOCK TRANSFERS, INC. FOR 6805 SHARES OF LIM OAN HIONG HAS BEEN LOST. IF NO CONTEST RECEIVED NEW CERTIFICATES WILL BE ISSUED.
PDI-DEC.17, 24, 2006 & JAN. 7, 2007

Notice of Lost Official Receipt PAPEMELROTI STA LUCIA Booklet #1 #00001 - 00050

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CCP and DZRH "Sugpuin ang korupsiyon" cited by CMMA

"SUGPUIN ANG Korupsiyon" (SAK), a weekly-public service radio service program produced by the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) was recently awarded the 2006 Catholic Mass Media Awards (CMMA) for Best Counseling and Public Service Program.

Now on its third year, "Sugpuin ang Korupsiyon" ("Eradicate Corruption") is a radio talk show aired over DZRH on Saturdays from 2-3 pm. As the title implies, the program focuses on corruption and is fast attracting a growing community of listeners who wish to redress their grievances about corrupt practices in the government bureaucracy, as well as in the private sector.

Hosted by noted broadcaster Ruth Abao, SAK is an offshoot of the runaway hit play, *"Anatomiya ng Korupsiyon"* ("The Anatomy of Corruption") by playwright Malou Jacob, which explicitly presents how corruption works in the government agency. According to the Eva Salvador, department manager for the CCP's Cultural Resource and Communication Services, and SAK's executive director, they get phone calls and text messages from as far as Tuguegarao in Cagayan, Cotabato, Lanao and other parts of Mindanao. Likewise, Salvador adds that the program's success is measured not by the number of calls and complaints received, but by the response of the listeners and the government agencies that are also trying to clean up the bureaucracy. She says the complaints and cases are processed immediately and endorsed to the agencies concerned, and sent to the Office of the Ombudsman.

CMMA 2006 TROPHY.

Republika ng Pilipinas
Republic of the Philippines
Kagawaran ng Tanggulang Pambansa
Department of National Defense

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. The Department of National Defense (Armed Forces of the Philippines), through the *AFP Modernization Program Act Trust Fund* and the *Department of Energy-Transferred Fund*, intends to apply the sum of ***THREE BILLION NINE HUNDRED FORTY FIVE MILLION ONE HUNDRED FORTY THOUSAND PESOS (PhP 3,945,140,000.00)*** being the total *Approved Budget for the Contract* (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Acquisition of the Armed Forces of the Philippines Defense Equipment.
2. The DND/AFP now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the bidding of the various AFP defense equipment, with the respective cost of bidding documents per project, as follows:

NAME OF PROJECT	APPROVED BUDGET OF THE CONTRACT	Cost of Bidding Document
1. 40MM Grenade Launcher	Php 160.06M	Php16,000.00
2. EOD Bomb Suit	82.35	8,000.00
3. Squad Automatic Weapon	1,129.06	50,000.00
4. GPS Handheld Receiver Acquisition Project	103.55	10,000.00
5. 50mW Personal Role Radio (PRR)	520.09	50,000.00
6. MD 520MG Upgrade	224.00	20,000.00
7. UH-1H	400.00	40,000.00
8. Aerial Camera	62.85	6,000.00
9. Army Watercraft Project	109.42	10,000.00
10. Truck, 1-¼ Ton Troop Carrier, 4x4	1,153.76	50,000.00
TOTAL	Php 3,945.14M	

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the *Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A* (IRR-A) of *Republic Act No. 9184* (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "*Government Procurement Reform Act*," and is open to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in *Section II* of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the *Lowest Calculated Bid* (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the *Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder* (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the *DND Bids and Awards Committee* (DND BAC) *Secretariat* and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address specified below from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount specified above. The method of payment will be in cash or thru cashier's check. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. To facilitate eligibility checking, manufacturers and/or prospective bidders who wish to participate in the public bidding may apply for registration with the DND BAC, through the DND BAC Secretariat, at least fifteen (15) days prior to the scheduled submission and opening of bids for the procurement of the projects they wish to participate in, pursuant to *DND BAC Cir 01-2005* dated 12 May 2005.
7. The DND/AFP reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

DND BAC Secretariat
1/F DND Building, Camp Gen Emilio Aguinaldo
Quezon City, Philippines 1110
Tel. No: (632) 911-6001 local 8414
Telefax No: (632) 421-3531
Email: bacsecretariat@dnd.gov.ph
Website: www.dnd.gov.ph

(Sgd.) ASEC ROBERTO G NUQUI
Chairman, DND BAC

(PDI - Jan. 7, 2007)

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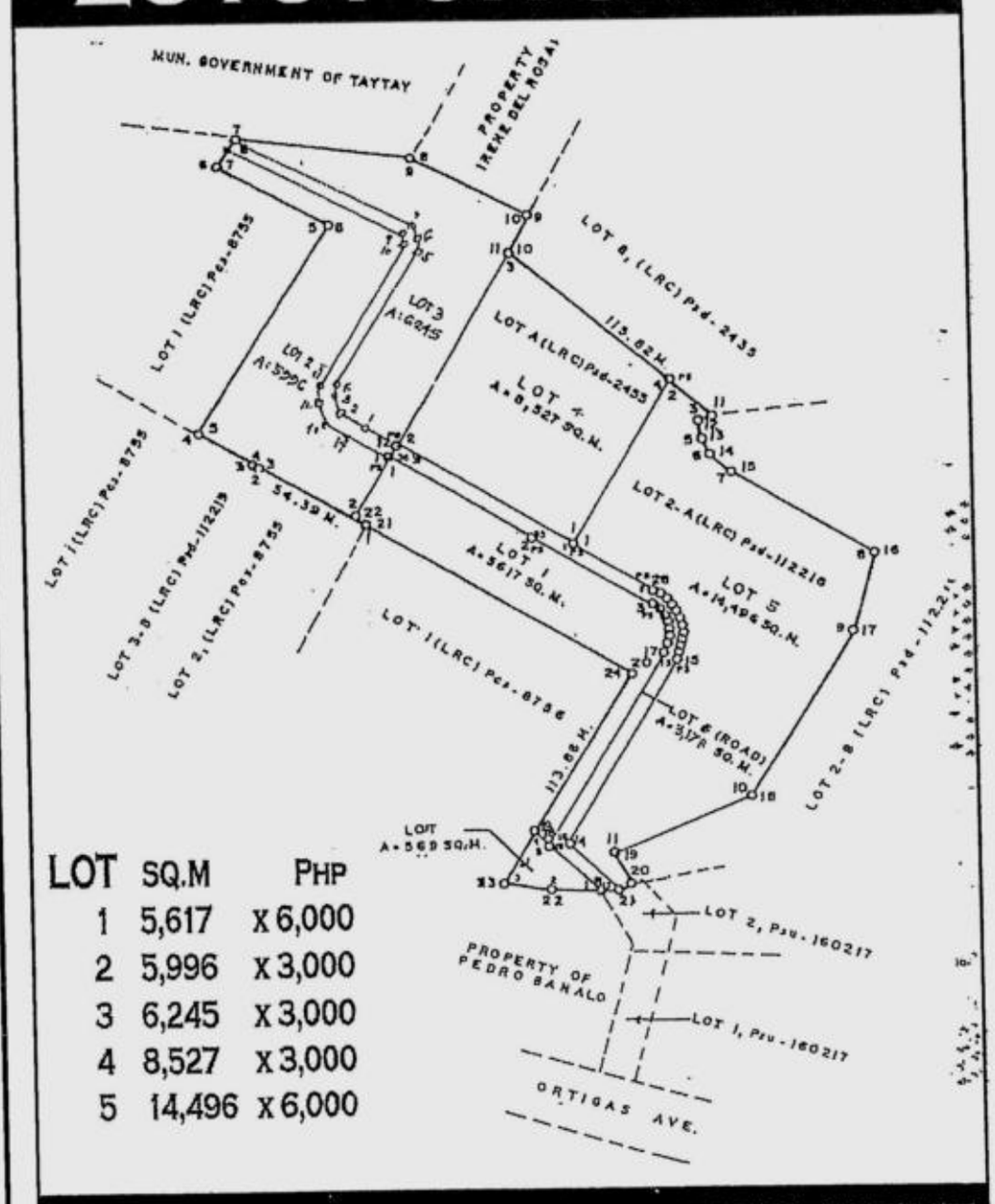

LOT	SQ.M	PHP
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3	6,245	x 3,000
4	8,527	x 3,000
5	14,496	x 6,000

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Daygon, a Cebuano Christmas caroling tradition

DID YOU KNOW THAT THE *"PAMAMASKO"* or the singing of Christmas carols from house to house to solicit donations is not a modern concept but rather a tradition that dates back to the Spanish period? And are you aware that the song "Ang Pasko'y Sumapit", a favorite among carolers was originally written in Cebuano by Mariano Vestil and composed by Vicente Rubi in 1933 as a contribution to the Daygon tradition of their province?

Considered as part of the country's plucked string tradition, the Daygon is practiced yearly in Cebu and Dumaguete. It is a tradition whereby a group of singers often accompanied by guitar and banduria players make their way into urban and provincial municipal areas, moving from shop to shop or house to house, singing Christmas carols and playing instruments to earn money during the yuletide season.

According to Beaunoni A. Espina, author of Music in the Philippines and the Development of Sacred Music there, the daygon was originally the Spanish villancico, Spanish secular songs which were later applied to the popular religious songs that arose from the tradition of the Cantigas de Maria. Espina wrote that the "Villacicos were first introduced in the Philippines in their pure style, both in music and texts and later translated into the different vernaculars. The term villancico was substituted by the Filipino term daygon. The early daygon were lengthy carols sung in the free and almost spoken fashion of the plainsong. Later on, they became more melodic and lyric, in the style of modern Christmas carols." The Daygon was sung throughout the whole length of the Christmas season, from Advent to the Feast of the Three Kings. Other sources state that the tradition even extends to February 2, the Feast of the Presentation of our Lord.

Espina also noted in his book that one of the earliest forms of daygon is the *pastores*, a song and dance ritual that tells the story of the Nativity in 6/8 time (villacico) or balse, pasa doble or irregular rhythm to alter the original song's character according to the local taste. Guitars, tambourines and castanets often accompanied the pastores.

The Daygon is only one of the many music traditions of the Philippines that find its roots in the other music cultures of the world. It is celebrated, among many plucked string traditions, in the coming International Rondalla Festival which will take place in Dumaguete City in February 2007.

PASTORES, ONE OF THE EARLIEST FORMS OF DAYGON. Visayan kids garbed in colorful costumes tell of the story of Christ's birth in song and in dance often to raise money for the coming year's fiesta activities.

OBITUARIES

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

BENJAMIN MANALO MARTINEZ
'LOBEN'

who passed away in the Grace of our Lord on December 15, 2006

wish to express our deepest appreciation to those who had offered love and prayers during our time of greatest sorrow.

Our Dearly Beloved

Anacleto "Cletz" Lumba Bandril

Peacefully joined Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on January 1, 2007 at the age of 67.

He is survived by his wife **Agnella**; children: **Angelito, Allen & Mia, Andrew, Mary Anne & David, Alexander, Aimee & Ron, Alfie & Carol, Angela & Bogard**; grandchildren: **Roman, Isaac, Dominic, Michael, Addison, Ira** and **Aniella**; and brothers & sisters: (†) **Rolly, Sr. Erlinda, Dante, Chito** and **Baby**.

We thank Our Lord and Mother Mary for giving him countless blessings.

His remains lie in state at St. Paul of the Cross Parish Church, Rainbow St., SSS Village, Concepcion II, Marikina City.

Interment will be on January 11, 2007 at the Garden of Paradise, Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at St. Paul of the Cross Parish Church, Rainbow St., SSS Village, Concepcion II, Marikina City.

"May his soul and all the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen."

Our Dearly Beloved

LICERIA ESCALANTE ESTIPONA

(August 27, 1943 – December 9, 2006)

On the 30th day after she died, masses will be offered for the eternal repose of her soul on Monday, January 08, 2007 at the following churches:

St. Anthony of Padua Parish – *Gubat, Sorsogon* ..... 5:30 a.m.
Cathedral Parish of Sts. Peter & Paul – *Sorsogon City, Sorsogon* ..... 6:00 a.m.
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish – *Magallanes, Sorsogon* ..... 5:30 a.m.
St. Anthony of Padua Parish – *Juban, Sorsogon* ..... 5:30 a.m.
St. Michael the Archangel Parish – *Irosin, Sorsogon* ..... 5:30 a.m.
Immaculate Conception Parish – *Bulan, Sorsogon* ..... 5:45 a.m.
Our Lady of Fatima Parish – *Sorsogon City, Sorsogon* ..... 6:15 a.m.
Holy Infant Jesus Parish – *Matnog, Sorsogon* ..... 6:15 a.m.
Most Holy Rosary Parish – *Casiguran, Sorsogon* ..... 6:00 a.m.
Our Lady of the Annunciation Parish – *Bacon District, Sorsogon* ..... 6:00 a.m.
Our Lady of the Pillar – *Pilar, Sorsogon* ..... 6:00 a.m.
St. James the Greater Parish – *Bulusan, Sorsogon* ..... 6:00 a.m.
St. Joseph Parish – *Barcelona, Sorsogon* ..... 6:00 a.m.
St. Joseph the Worker Parish – *Donsol, Sorsogon* ..... 6:00 a.m.
St. Lawrence Parish – *Prieto Diaz, Sorsogon* ..... 6:00 a.m.
St. Mary Magdalene Parish – *Sta. Magdalena, Sorsogon* ..... 6:00 a.m.
Parish of St. Mary Magdalene – *Kawit, Cavite* ..... 6:30 a.m.
Augustinian Monastery of St. Rita of Casia – *Gubat, Sorsogon* ..... 6:30 a.m.
Sto. Niño de Paz Chapel – *Greenbelt, Makati* ..... 7:45 a.m.
St. John the Baptiser Parish – *Castilla, Sorsogon* ..... 2:00 p.m.

*Her loving brother, **Lino**, requests the relatives, friends and people whose lives she has touched to offer a prayer for her soul. Her sister, **Lilia** & brother-in-law, **Ronald Peters; Emily, Brad, Elijah, Alie, Emmet; Frank**; her extended family, **Nestor, Elisa** and their families; and **aunt Manay Dede**; also convey sincere appreciation and gratitude to all who sympathized, offered masses, prayers and sent flowers, and kept **Manay Licing** alive in their memories and hearts.*

MANUEL ACOSTA ANCHETA

Went home to be with our Lord Jesus on December 31, 2006 at the age of 86.

Survived by his wife **Sarah Managbanag** and his 7 children: **Lionel, Becky, David, Laverna, Joel, Lela, Flodee** and their spouses; his 28 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

A memorial service was held at **Church Among the Palms UPLB** last January 5th, 2007.

To contact family members, please call **(049) 536-4552.**

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

TERESITA DEL MUNDO-TAN

who passed away in the grace of our Lord on December 30, 2006

express our heartfelt gratitude and sincere appreciation to all those who offered masses and prayers, sent flowers and messages of sympathy and who in countless ways, condoled with and comforted us in our time of bereavement.

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS: ● Copy of Death Certificate ● Any Identification document (I.D.)

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

People, Events & Products

SUNDAY, JANUARY 7, 2007

E-mail: pr_pep@inquirer.com.ph
aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Aries Espinosa

Ford to 'Make Every Day Exciting' for Filipinos

FORD GROUP PHILIPPINES OPENS 2007 with a new brand promise to "Make Every Day Exciting" for Filipino consumers, starting with the debut of its complete line-up of sports utility vehicles on Jan. 10, followed by its first public test drive on Saturday, Jan. 13 at the SM Mall of Asia.

To emphasize Ford's leadership in the SUV market in the country, both events will feature the much-awaited local premiere of the all-new Ford Everest, Ford Escape, Ford Explorer Eddie Bauer and Ford Expedition Eddie Bauer.

Bringing to life Ford's new tagline, "Make Every Day Exciting," these events mark the company's renewed commitment in delivering new innovative and fuel- efficient vehicles that are modern, stylish and fun to drive that give their owners a sense of pride, as well as providing excellent value in terms of overall cost of ownership.

"Ford has always been dedicated in offering exciting automotive products and driving experiences to consumers," said Richard Baker, newly-appointed president of Ford Group Philippines. "The launch of our latest SUVs reaffirms our promise to make 'Make Every Day Exciting,' by continuing to be the innovation leader in the automotive sector, setting industry benchmarks in terms of product quality and safety, service and customer satisfaction. In addition, it carries forward Ford's renowned SUV heritage in the Philippine market."

The launch event is Baker's first public appearance as Ford Group Philippines' president. Formerly president director of Ford Motor Company Indonesia, he brings with him 30 years of Ford experience including 15 years in Asia Pacific to this new role.

The all-new models of the Everest, Escape, Explorer and Expedition have been specially designed to cater to various discriminating needs of SUV enthusiasts, and offer Ford's distinguished SUV quality, performance, luxury and safety.

"We at Ford are confident that our newest SUV offering completely meets the Filipino SUV drivers' expectations," said Luie Dy Buncio, Ford Group Philippines' vice president for sales and marketing. "We know what the customers want, - not only are we among one of the strongest SUV player in the market, we have pioneered and shaped the segment itself."

Today, Ford offers the broadest and most far-reaching line-up of SUVs - Everest, Escape, Explorer and Expedition - exemplifying Ford's authentic SUV heritage.

The perfect family transportation, Everest is the mid-size SUV designed to meet their flexible needs for safety, capability and comfort. It will be unveiled in the country with class-leading safety features, including industry-first side airbags. Escape, on the other hand, proved to be a huge success with the young-at-heart customers who appreciate the compact SUV's ultimate versatility for work and play. This year, it storms into the local market with a completely new engine - the DOHC variable valve timing system (VVTI) engine.

A runaway success since its debut in 1990, Explorer has remained the best-selling SUV in the world for more than 10 years because of its superior power and safety. Now, it boasts to be even better - an intelligent vehicle both in safety and comfort. Expedition is built with full-size SUV buyers in mind, delivering no-compromise capability and toughness with interior flexibility and luxurious refinement. It will be unveiled in the public with class-exclusive 6-speed automatic transmission with overdrive.

Catch all these vehicles in action in the following Ford dealerships nationwide: In Metro Manila, Ford can be found in Alabang, Balintawak, Commonwealth, Edsa, Libis, Makati, Manila, Quezon Avenue and Shaw Blvd. In the provinces, Ford dealerships are located in Bacolod, Cabanatuan, Cagayan de Oro, Cavite, Cebu, Dagupan, Davao, Iloilo, Pampanga and San Pablo. For more information, you may call 889-FORD (3673).

90% of Asians are Lactose Intolerant

ONE OF THE MOST WIDESPREAD medical conditions in Asia, yet one of the most unnoticed is Lactose Intolerance (LI). Since Asians are not milk drinkers, indifference to milk and other milk based products are not given full attention as a medical condition. People who developed symptoms of LI just shy away from milk products. Yet the danger there is that they are not getting the nutrients found only in dairy products.

Lactose Intolerance (LI) is not an allergy to dairy. LI is a medical condition and happens when the body cannot digest a significant amount of lactose, a sugar found in milk, due to inadequate production of the enzyme lactase. This enzyme is found in the small intestine and as people mature, supply of this enzyme deteriorates thereby increasing the risk for lactose intolerance. The solution to this problem at the moment is to shy away from lactose-laden products, - milk and dairy-based products - which deprives them of calcium, protein, vitamins and other nutrients found only in these products. Because of this serious concern, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that those who are lactose intolerant, try calcium consumption strategies to get that much-needed calcium. Part of these strategies is taking lactase-enzyme replacements.

According to Steve Carper, the author of Milk is Not for Every Body, LI is a permanent condition and one way of dealing with it is to get lactase from a reliable outside source.

Lacteeze is the breakthrough product for Lactose Intolerance. It can help in eliminating symptoms of lactose intolerance. For Asians to get the full benefit offered by milk, it is wise to seek a little help from Lacteeze. It is exclusively sold at Mercury Drugstore.

MDH INAUGURATES CHILD NEUROSCIENCES CENTER

Manila Doctors Hospital, in line with its 50th anniversary celebration recently opened its Child Neurosciences Center a 'one-stop-shop' facility like this a few years back. 'Now, it's a reality - a place where chidren with special needs can be given care in one place,' said Dr. Aida Salonga, child neurologist and head of MDH Child Neuroscience Center. The Center, which is designed as a one-stop-shop clinic adopts a multidisciplinary approach in the care of youngsters with a wide range of neurologic, neurosurgical and neurodevelopmental illnesses. The Center's pool of consultants includes medical specialists such as child neurologists, developmental and neurodevelopmental pediatricians, neurosurgeons, neonatologists, geneticists, child psychiatrists and child pschologists; as well as affiliate sub-specialty like neuro-rehabilitation specialists. Photo shows, from right: Dr. Aida Salonga, section chief, Child Neurosciences Center, lawyer Pilar Almira, MDH hospital director, Dr. Lillian Lee, MDH Dept. of Pediatrics, Vicky Morales, TV personality, Dr. Dante Morales, MDH Medical director and Dr. Faustino Domingo, MDH neurosurgeon.

ISLAM PROVIDES LAND AREA TO CONSTRUCT OLPP CHURCH

To prove to the world that Islam and Roman Catholic can live harmoniously and can see eye to eye in the eyes of Allah, the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia through the intercession of Taguig City government has allotted 5,000 square meters to Our Lady of the Poor Parish Church where a shrine will be constructed at the prime lot of the Food Terminal Compound (FTI), Taguig City. Rev. Fr. Simplicio Roxas, OLPP parish priest (4th from left), Rev. Fr. Edgar Alan Pacete, OLPP guest priest (extreme right) and Taguig City Mayor Sigfrido Tinga (3rd from left), witnessed by Taguig City officials and OLPP Lay officials, have concluded the memorandum of understanding.

AVENT AWARDS BABY PHOTO CONTEST WINNER

Avent, the world's leading infant feeding brand, represented by Sally Sy (3rd from left) and Eryl Valeroso, Cannon-Avent product manager (extreme right) shown officially awarding 2006 Avent Regional Baby Photo Contest winner three-year-old Filipino Dennis Angelo Cresencio Solano with parents Denise Araullo-Solano and Crisaldo C. Solano via a simple ceremony held in San Juan recently. Solano's photo won over a hundred entries nationwide and topped finalists within Asia. His winnings include a trip to Hong Kong and choice Avent products. Avent is the fastest growing infant feeding brand in the world, committed to providing only products of the highest standard. Its creation of a revolutionary feeding system, which included electronic breast pumps, bottles and nipples specially designed to reduce colic -- has been setting trends for baby products worldwide.

ProductFILES

Sweating burns calories

BODIMATE IS THE ONLY SLIMMING AND WORK out product in the market where you see the effects instantly on your body and problem areas. Bodimate improves the thermogenic effect (burning calories) during a work out. It enhances and accelerates heat production making you sweat more. Bodimate is a great motivational work out partner. Your work out feels easier and more effective when you feel yourself sweating which pushes you to exercise longer and harder. Makes you feel satisfied after a work out. Apply Bodimate to get maximum results from your time at the sauna when you don't have time to exercise. Sweating helps eliminate toxins from your body. Bodimate is a good moisturizer and has cleansing benefits for the skin even on the neck and face. It has a clean fresh scent and does not feel sticky on the skin. Bodimate is exclusively distributed by HDI Network, 3/F Suite 302 Jollibee Plaza Bldg, Emerald Ave, Ortigas Center Pasig City, with tel. nos. 635-2433 or 635-2431.

BDO ON-SITE OPENS NEW OUTLET

BDO On-Site recently opened its 10th outlet at the 2nd floor of SM City North EDSA (The Block). Attending the blessing were (from left): Rolando C. Tanchanco (president of BDO Financial Services Inc and concurrent EVP of BDO Consumer Lending Group), Debbie P. Sy (director/corporate secretary of BDO Financial Services Inc), Imelda I. Elido (VP - business head of BDO Financial Services, Inc), Fr. Jaime Bautista (officiating priest) and Mrs. Felicidad Sy (wife of Henry Sy Sr.).

ANNUAL ROCHE AIDS WALK

Roche (Philippines) Inc employees participated in the Annual Roche Aids Walk with an event called 'Walk for Hope' at the Quezon Memorial Circle. This event was also marked by the turn-over of a donation amounting to over P250,000 to the HIV/AIDS program H4/Bahay Lingap Pavilion of the San Lazaro Hospital to benefit Filipino children affected by the disease and the treatment, research and advocacy for HIV/AIDS. In photo (from left): Lilibeth Inocencio, corporate affairs director of Roche (Phils) Inc, Dr. Joy Aguadera from the Department of Psychiatry San Lazaro Hospital, Dr. Rosario Jessica Abrenica, department head of HIV/ Bahay Lingap Pavilion of the San Lazaro Hospital and lawyer Noli Tibayan, human resources director of Roche (Phils) Inc.

The gift of health

THE YULETIDE SEASON IS OVER. THE TIME when we overindulged in gastronomic delights and basked in the warmth of the season and the warm embrace of those we truly love. But after all the bustle, most of us are left sporting a few extra pounds and inches. Christmas is the time to be jolly and be worried.

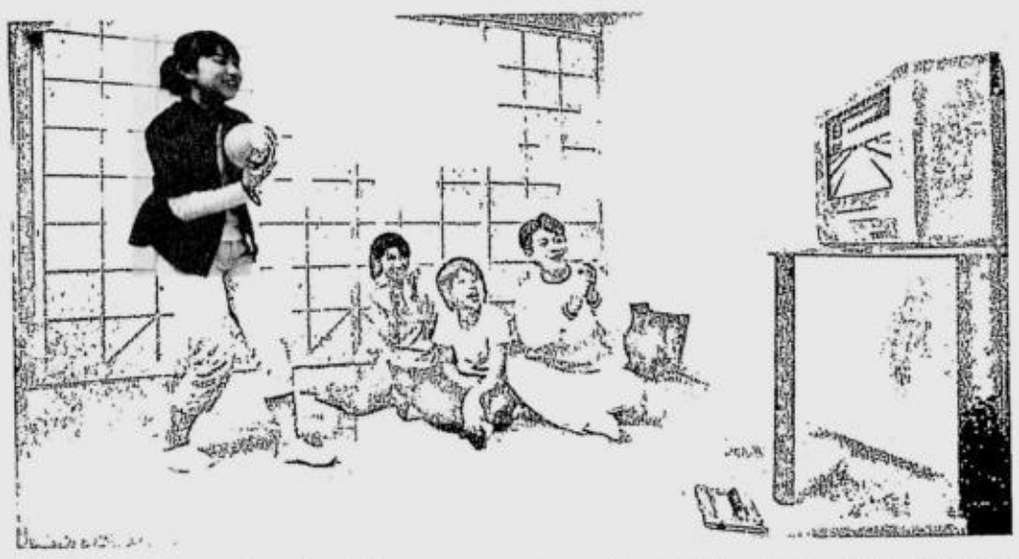
The holidays heighten the Pinoy unhealthy lifestyle. A landmark study by the Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI) showed that the health of Filipinos is deteriorating.

Furthermore, the time wasted in monstrous traffic going to the gym or the bulky and boring exercise machines at home discourage a lot of people.

But the good news is — with modern technology comes modern convenience. The latest craze in staying fit has reached the Philippines shores. It's called XaviX. Developed by international superstar Jackie Chan, XaviX is a new way to exercise using the TV. From your favorite sorts to high-energy, fat-busting workouts, XaviX Port gets you into shape right in the comfort of your home at your convenient time. XaviX Port easily connects to the AV input of any standard television set.

Using the XaviX Port, anyone can compete against the console or another player in a multitude of sports. The XaviX Port uses a proprietary processor to create a truly interactive experience.

Lose weight and burn calories in a fun way like you have never experienced before. Choose from a variety of interactive physical activities:



- XaviX Aerostep - XaviX Aerostep and its wireless J-MAT, it's like you're in Jackie Chan's fitness gym. Sweat it out and burn calories by going interactive.
- XaviX PowerBoxing - Jackie Chan Studio Fitness Powerboxing uses wireless boxing gloves to test endurance, speed and reflexes.
- XaviX Tennis - With XaviX Tennis, step into the action and up to the net to play tennis just like you're on the court.
- XaviX Bowling - This interactive application allows you to experience all the fun and interaction of a real bowling at home.
- XaviX Golf - For leaders who don't have time to go golfing, XaviX provides an interactive game to play on your television.

XaviX is a whole new way to get fit and have fun. It's a great gadget pick to get you into shape. After all, the best gift you can give this Christmas and beyond is yourself - a healthy and vivacious you that has the energy and zest to spend quality time with those that truly matter.

Available only at the Electronics Boutique branches: Alabang Town Center 772-3251/772-3250; Park Square 1 816-4423/816-2440; Festival Supermall 842-8221/809-9100; Robinsons Galleria 636-5077/636-0206; Market! Market! 886-7939/886-7949; Sta. Lucia East Grand Mall 681-5424/681-5453.

logicaCMG

Join our Global Service Delivery Team and Release your Potential

Opportunities to work in Europe and beyond

We are looking for Business and IT specialists who have good English language skills and are enthusiastic about working for international customers from our new BPO and IT service centre in Metro Manila. The roles will involve both local and European working hours. For some roles, European language skills and willingness to spend time working abroad will also be important.

We are searching for candidates with a range of experience and expertise. A minimum of 2 years working experience, professional qualification, and a good track record in a management position is an advantage, as well as previous employment in a large multinational or multicultural corporate environment.

Global Service Delivery SAP Consultants

The Global Service Delivery (GSD) ERP Services team supports multiple clients in ERP products (predominantly SAP). The Applications Team provides support for all modules of SAP (with the exception of HR and Payroll). Customers exist in the UK, the Netherlands, Czech Republic and India. A successful candidate would be able to resolve complex issues and support other consultants. Good knowledge of linked modules would be advantageous. The consultants' role with GSD will include supporting existing customers, assisting with upgrades, assisting Service Delivery Managers with sales opportunities, assisting Service Creation team with bids, understanding customers' businesses and developing value adding solutions and working with team members in other countries on resolving complex issues. We need consultants with the following skills:

SAP Basis Senior Consultant
- At least 4-5 years experience as a SAP Basis consultant' With formal SAP Academy training
- 7-10 years experience in a consultancy environment
- Experience of SAP Implementation in at least one blue-chip company
- Previous Management of Basis implementation or upgrade projects, installing, maintaining, monitoring SAP systems
- 3+ years in a support environment or multiple full life cycle projects
- Comprehensive understanding of Business procedures
- Experience of having communicated important business information at all levels in an organisation

SAP Senior PP Consultant
- With PP Certification or evidence of at least 2 project cycles
- Excellent understanding of PP business processes; PP-PI knowledge and knowledge of integration with other modules
- Good verbal and written English communication skills

SAP Senior SD Consultant
- With SD Certification or evidence of at least 2 project cycles; Excellent understanding of SD business processes
- Good verbal and written English communication skills

SAP Basis Senior Portal Consultant
- At least 4-5 years experience as a certified SAP consultant; With formal SAP Academy training
- 2+ years experience in a consultancy environment
- Experience of SAP Implementation in at least three blue-chip companies
- Previous management of Portal Implementation or upgrade projects, installing, maintaining, monitoring SAP systems
- 2+ years in a support environment or multiple full life cycle projects
- Comprehensive understanding of Business procedures
- Experience of having communicated important business information at all levels in an organisation, from clerical staff to higher management
- High level of experience in SAP Programming (Java, Javascript), BI or Basis

Senior FI/CO consultant
- FI/CO Certification or evidence of at least 2 project cycles
- Excellent understanding of FI/CO business processes
- Knowledge of COPA, COPC and PCA
- Good verbal and written English communication skills

ABAP Developer
- 5 years business experience minimum in consultancy or logistics environment
- 3 Years SAP R/3 ABAP development, or at least 2 full Life Cycle Project
- Experience of SAP R/3 implementations
- Experience in developing both Reports and Transactions
- Experience in creation of both Functional and Technical specifications
- Good knowledge of core ABAP programming procedures (including Report & Transaction creation, SAPScript/Smartforms, IDOC, ALE & ALV), and protocols
- Application of OSS notes
- Basic knowledge of key business processes in at least one industrial sector
- Experience of SAP version 4.7+ including OO ABAP
- ABAP Certified
- Experience in any other SAP modules, particularly Workflow and knowledge of Java-based coding

Senior MM Consultant
- MM Certification or evidence of at least 2 project cycles
- Excellent understanding of MM business processes
- Good verbal and written English communication skills

Support Engineers

We are looking for **Support Engineers who will be responsible for the support and maintenance of a number of IBS UK applications. The candidate should be knowledgeable in Microsoft Visual Basic 6.0, Microsoft Active Server Page, VB Script, Java Script, ASP.NET, T-SQL, SQL Server 2000, VB 6.0, IIS (configuration and settings), Internet Explorer (settings), HTML, CSS and XML.**

Remedy Developers

We are looking for **Remedy Developers who will implement change requests, configure new customers in remedy, build and update SLAs and implement Remedy solutions. The candidate should have at least 3-5 years of experience in software development and 2-3 years of experience in configuring and administering Remedy ARS/Remedy ITSM suite of products. Knowledge in .NET, SQL server or Oracle and DBA tools is essential.**

JAVA/J2EE Specialists

If you are competent in Object Oriented system design and development, with a minimum of 2 years experience of Java, willing to travel, then this is the job for you.

We are looking for **JAVA/J2EE Specialists** who have worked in a structured system development environment and are fully familiar with the need for rigorous testing and documentation. Expertise in J2EE standards will be an advantage.

Please email your resume to PHJobs.MY@logicacmg.com. We are currently building our office at the 10th Floor Trafalgar Plaza, HV Dela Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City, Philippines. If you would like to mail your resume, you may send it to the 24th Floor Pacific Star Building, Buendia corner Makati Avenue, Makati City, Philippines.

LogicaCMG is a major international force in providing business and IT services. It employs 30,000 people across 36 countries. LogicaCMG's focus is on enabling its customers to build and maintain leadership positions using LogicaCMG's deep industry knowledge and its track record for successful delivery. The company provides business consulting, systems integration and IT and business process outsourcing across diverse markets including telecoms, financial services, energy and utilities, industry, distribution and transport and the public sector. Headquartered in Europe, LogicaCMG is listed on both the London Stock Exchange and Euronext (Amsterdam).

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Applications may also be sent to:
Human Resource Division
2nd Floor, Salustiana D. Ty Tower
104 Paseo De Roxas, Legaspi Village, Makati City
or
Human Resource Division
16th Floor, San Miguel Properties Centre,
St. Francis St. Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City

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- Preferably with PRC (LET) License

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- Graduate of any 4-yr course
- Well versed in oral and written Pin Yin or Mandarin
- Can communicate in English

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- For basketball, volleyball, soccer, badminton and futsal

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- With at least 2-yrs supervisory experience in marketing or related field
- With excellent oral and written communication skills
- Can work well under pressure

MARKETING / PR ASSISTANT
- Graduate of any business, mass communications or marketing course
- With excellent oral and written communication skills
- With pleasing personality and related work experience
- Can work well under pressure

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS (5)
- Graduate of BS Accountancy, Psychology, Statistics or Marketing
- With excellent oral and written communication skills
- Proficient in computer applications

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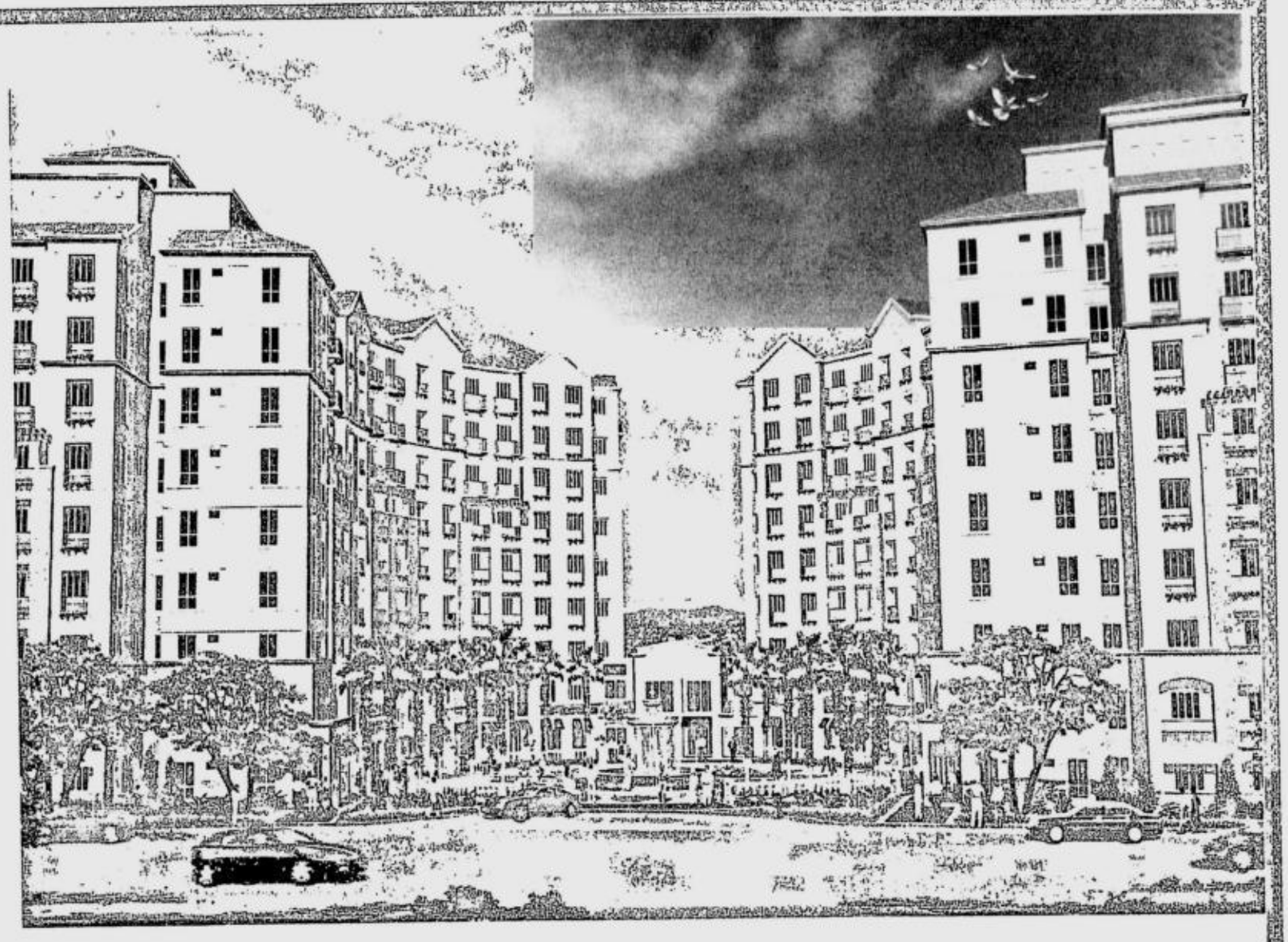

Megaworld Newport Holdings, Inc. is the exclusive marketing company for Newport City, the premier 25-hectare satellite city development soon to rise in Pasay City, across from the new NAIA Terminal 3.

In line with its growth and expansion plans for early 2007, the company would like to invite qualified applicants to fill the following key positions:

SALES MANAGERS (8)

- Male/female
- 28 to 38 years old
- At least 2 years' proven experience as a Sales Manager in real estate or other related industries
- Has the ability and proven track record to manage and lead property consultants toward the achievement of team sales targets
- Can further develop and grow the business

PROPERTY CONSULTANTS (30)

- Male/female
- Not more than 30 years old
- With a college degree from a reputable school
- With above average communication skills and pleasing personality
- Sales experience in the real estate industry a big advantage

MARKETING OFFICER

- Male/female
- 26 to 32 years old
- 3 to 5 years experience in advertising, PR or brand management
- With extensive contacts and network in the industry
- Willing to work long hours and during weekends

TRAINING OFFICER

- Male/female
- 26 to 32 years old
- 3 to 5 years experience as a senior trainer
- Can handle all training-related functions of large sales groups
- With high energy and strong motivational skills

DOCUMENTATION OFFICER

- Male/female
- 26 to 32 years old
- With 3 years' experience in documentation processing and customer service
- Proficient in Microsoft Office
- Willing to be assigned in Quezon City

Interested applicants should bring a resumé with 2 ID photos and look for:

Ms. Bekkie Benitez or Mr. Dante Robles
HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
Newport City Information Center,
Newport City, Pasay City

Or e-mail your resumé to hrad@newport city.com.ph or call 855-7587 or 855-2535 local 143 for more information.

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- Must possess a graduate degree in Statistics/Applied Statistics or graduate degree in a course with heavy emphasis on Statistics such as Operations Research or Econometrics
- Experience with SAS programming is essential
- Knowledge of various bivariate and multivariate statistical techniques, including factor analysis, analysis of variance, multiple regression, logit, discriminant function analysis, cluster analysis and conjoint analysis
- Must be a good communicator and be able to write and present statistical findings about complex subject matter in general business terms.

B. SENIOR RESEARCH EXECUTIVE

- Has working experience in the selection and application of appropriate market research techniques, and must demonstrate a good understanding of their strategic and commercial implications
- Capable of dealing with corporate clients and is confident to analyze and present research results to senior management
- Natural team player, possess leadership and coordinating skills in implementing research projects (i.e., working with support groups from other units of the Company)
- Has 3-4 years working experience doing or coordinating researchers-from another research agency, an ad agency, business or economic think-tanks; or from using market research at the client-user side
- Graduate of Behavioral Science, Statistics, Business Economics, Marketing, Sociology, Communications Research, or Economics with above-average scholastic standing
- Adept with data, excellent written and oral communication skills.

C. RESEARCH ASSOCIATE

- Not more than 25 years old, graduate of Psychology, Anthropology, Statistics, Business Economics, Marketing, Sociology, Communications Research or Economics with above-average scholastic standing. Fresh graduates are welcome.
- Familiar with or has basic knowledge of research (design, implementation, data processing and analysis).
- Adept with data, analytical, excellent written and oral communication skills.

The role of the above individuals will be varied and challenging; within a friendly team environment; and it also offers very good career prospects.

If you are interested, please send your CV with photo, academic credentials or transcript of records to:

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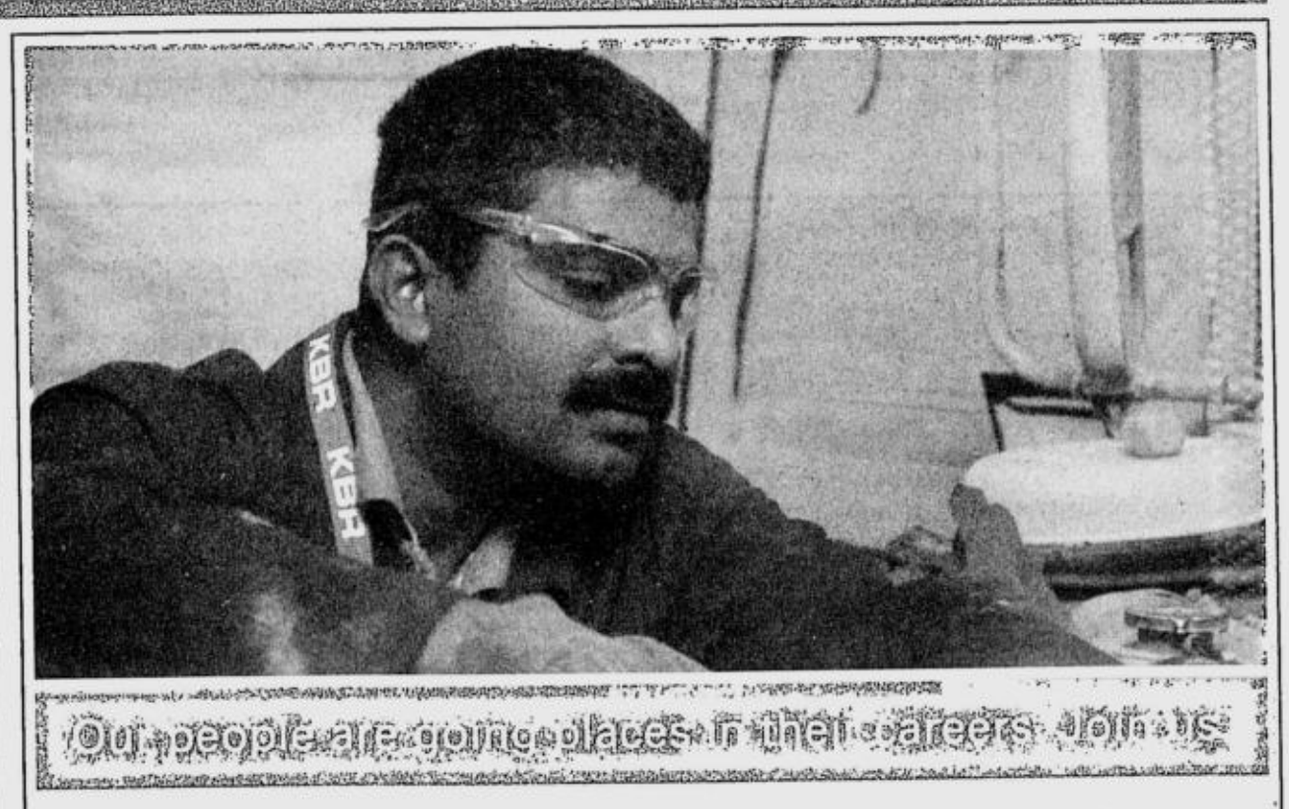
Highway Hills, Mandaluyong City

E-mail address: research@psrc-ri.com.ph



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Assistant to the VP for Engineering Services; Job Code: D051
- 3 to 5 years of relevant engineering practice (Civil / Structural / Mechanical / Sanitary / Electrical) with at least 2 years of exposure to a multidisciplinary engineering environment
- Management experience is a plus
- Must have good analytical skills as this position will be required to look at different engineering services across a multidisciplinary environment and integrate those services to fit management and client requirement.
- Experience in managing sub-contractors is a plus
- Proactive, flexible, and willing to work extended hours

Assistant to the VP for Engineering Support; Job Code: DO52
- 3 to 5 years of relevant engineering practice (Civil / Structural / Mechanical / Sanitary / Electrical) with at least 2 years of exposure to a multidisciplinary engineering environment
- Management experience is a plus
- Must have good organizational skills as this position will be required to look at different engineering services and integrate them in support of a region as designated by management.
- Experience in managing middle management is a plus
- Proactive, flexible, and willing to work extended hours

Document Control and Database Manager Job Code: D053
- 3 to 5 years of relevant documentation control experience with at least 2 years of exposure to an engineering based company
- ISO 9001:2000 experience is a plus
- Must have thorough documentation organizational skills as this position will be required to manage documents across a multidisciplinary engineering environment.
- Experience in managing documentation in a web-based/electronic based environment is a must
- Expertise in MS Office Applications is required
- Management experience is a plus
- Proactive, flexible, and willing to work extended hours

Cost and Schedule Manager Job Code: D054
- 7 to 10 years of relevant engineering practice (Civil / Structural / Mechanical / Sanitary / Electrical) with at least 5 years of exposure to a Quantity Surveying in a multidisciplinary environment
- Management experience is a plus
- Must have thorough understanding of the concepts of cost and scheduling and its effects on a projects lifecycle
- Proficiency in MS Project and Primavera is a must
- Experience in High-rise buildings is a requirement.
- Proactive, flexible, and willing to work extended hours

Metrics Engineer/Specialist (Daily and Weekly Reports); Job Code: D012
- 3 to 5 years of relevant experience as a program analyst utilizing statistical methods and process engineering. At least 2 years of exposure to a Quality Assurance environment
- Expertise with the use of MS Excel and/or MS Access is required
- Must have thorough understanding of the concepts of data analysis through graphic representation.
- Management experience is a plus
- Proactive, flexible, and willing to work extended hours

Lead Engineer (4 positions) Job Codes: D019, D024, D028, D038
- 3 to 5 years of relevant engineering practice (Civil / Structural / Mechanical / Sanitary / Electrical) with at least 2 years of exposure to a multidisciplinary engineering environment
- Must have good organizational skills as this position will be required to look at different engineering services and integrate them in support of a region as designated by management.
- Expertise in MS Office programs is a must
- Minimum 2 years of onsite experience is a plus
- Management experience is a plus as this position will require management of a team of engineers.
- Proactive, flexible, and willing to work extended hours

Sanitary Engineer (Design Review Function Region 5) Job Code: D035
- 2 to 3 years of relevant engineering practice (Sanitary) with at least 1 year of exposure to a sanitary engineering design environment
- Must have good organizational skills as this position will be required to look at all design submittals of one region and make sure they are all given timely review by the subcontractor
- Minimum 1 year of onsite experience is a plus
- Proactive, flexible, and willing to work extended hours

Engineer (Quantity Surveyor; 6 positions); Job Code: D045, D046, D047, D048, D049, D050
- 2 to 3 years of relevant engineering practice (Civil / Structural / Mechanical / Sanitary / Electrical) with at least 2 years of exposure to a quantity surveying
- Minimum 1 year of onsite experience is a plus
- Proficiency in MS Project and Primavera (P3) is a must
- Proactive, flexible, and willing to work extended hours

QAP Engineer (Regional Team 6); Job Code: D041
- 2 to 3 years of relevant engineering practice (Civil / Structural / Mechanical / Sanitary / Electrical) with at least 1 year of exposure to a engineering design or specifications writing environment
- Must have good attention to detail as this position will be required to check the conformance and usage of the Quality Assurance Plans under his designated region
- Minimum 1 year of onsite experience is a plus
- Proactive, flexible, and willing to work extended hours

Engineering Support Staff (Regional Team; 3 positions) Job Codes: D042, D037, D032
- 1 to 2 years of electronic file documentation experience
- Well organized and thorough as this position shall be the caretaker of all pertinent documents that govern the Quality Assurance activities for the Region.
- Experience with an engineering firm is a plus.

Network Administrator (1 position)
- Trouble shooting for wireless network, computer and computer related equipment
- Tracking of all licensed programs, their utilization and inventory
- Scheduling of hardware and software preventive maintenance
- Scheduling of hardware and software upgrade
- Proactive, flexible, and willing to work extended hours

If you are keen to progress your career with a multinational company and have these skills and are available to work immediately, then send your comprehensive resume to hr.engg@yahoo.com or come in person to 22nd Floor 6750 Bldg. Ayala Avenue, Makati City. For online application, ensure to include the position, job code and desired salary.

Preference will be given to candidates who can start immediately.

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CONSULTANT

The objectives of the consultancy work (up to 4 months) are as follows:
- support the formulation and approval of results-based Barangay Action Plans in each of the 240 selected disadvantaged barangays
- organize the process to make it participative, inclusive and sustainable by identifying key stakeholders as well as by building their capacities for effective participation, planning and monitoring using the Human Rights- and Results-based Approaches.

Selection Criteria
- university degree (minimum master level) in social sciences with strong emphasis on planning and participative methods
- minimum of 5 years of work experience in a relevant field and preferably in community development, planning (RBM) & monitoring
- good knowledge of Results based management and Human rights based programming is necessary
- good knowledge of participative techniques is also a must

WE EXPECT TO RECEIVE FROM EACH APPLICANT, A PROPOSAL IN 2 PARTS: TECHNICAL PROPOSAL AND FINANCIAL PROPOSAL (EACH IN A SEPARATE ENVELOPE). Proposals are due on January 19, 2007.
FULL TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR's) ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST. E-mail Frederic Unterreiner at funterreiner@unicef.org.

DRIVER

Under the supervision of the Senior Administrative Assistant, operates and maintains the assigned UNICEF vehicle and provides general services, including messengerial and assistance at the airport to arriving/departing staff and visitors.

Selection Criteria
- Secondary education; college graduate a definite advantage
- Four years work experience as a driver; safe driving record
- Skills in minor vehicle repair
- Knowledge of driving rules and regulations and chauffeur courtesies.
- Ability to handle VIPs.
- Knowledge of first aid and security procedures, a definite advantage
- Excellent English

Please send your application on or before January 12, 2007 to:
The HR Unit, UNICEF Manila
31/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza,
6819 Ayala Avenue, Makati City
e-mail: gpfernandez@unicef.org

Applications from qualified women are encouraged. We only reply to shortlisted candidates. Previous applicants need not send their applications. UNICEF is a non-smoking environment.

IMMEDIATE HIRING

Utech System Corporation, engaged in information technology and an affiliate of an international company is in urgent need of personnel for the following positions:

Sales / Marketing Representative:
- Male or Female 24-36 yrs. old
- College Graduate
- Computer Literate
- At least 2 yrs of experience in sales

Office Secretary:
- Female 23-28 yrs. old
- Graduate of a business related course
- Computer Literate
- At least 3 yrs work experience
- Must be proficient in English – Oral and written

Submit your resumé to 88 Corporate Center Condominium, No. 141 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City or email w/ picture at hr@utechsystem.net or call 8140455-56 during office hours.

KITPLAN Philippines Inc. is urgently in need of the following:

Shift Managers
- College graduate, Japanese skills preferred
- Must have at least 1 year experience in a supervising position

Computer Technicians
- College graduate, familiarity with basic electronics preferred
- Extensive experience troubleshooting and maintaining computer equipment

Gaming Machine Instructors/Promo Ladies
- 20-25 years old, female, at least college level
- Good looking, must have cheerful, pleasing personality
- Self-motivated, able to follow instructions

Job sites are in Parañaque City and elsewhere.
Please send resumé with photograph attached to
sasamoto@kitplan.com
or contact Ms. Maybel Mateo at **0926-696-0028**

SM DEPARTMENT STORE

CAGAYAN DE ORO

SELLING MANAGER / SUPERVISOR

The successful candidate will be responsible for the planning, controlling and directing selling activities and personnel for the attainment of sales targets.

- male/female; not over 35 years old
- graduate of any 4-year Business course
- with 1 to 2 years experience in retail operations, fastfood/restaurant chains or in sales in the same capacity
- ability to carry out prompt and efficient customer service

BUILDING ADMINISTRATION OFFICER

The successful candidate will be reporting to the Branch Operations Manager of the assigned branch and will be responsible for the over-all supervision of the efficient operation of electrical and mechanical equipment such as airconditioning, plumbing, sanitation and building facilities; will ensure the maintenance of cleanliness and attractiveness of the common areas in accordance to company standards and will lead the maintenance personnel in the operations.

- male; not over 35 years old
- graduate of Business Administration, Mechanical or Electrical Engineering
- with 2 years work experience in property management and building administration in the same capacity
- able to lead a group, prioritize work load and meet deadlines

ACCOUNTING OFFICER

The successful candidate will be responsible for the over-all operations and management of the accounting activities of a department store. She will also ensure efficient implementation of integral plan for the control of the financial transactions of the company.

- must be a Certified Public Accountant
- female, not over 32 years old
- with 2 to 5 years of managerial experience in accounting operations
- has the ability to work in a fast paced environment
- ability to oversee and manage monthly/quarterly budget and variance analysis

Interested parties may apply personally from Monday to Friday, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM at

HUMAN RESOURCES DIVISION
SM Cagayan De Oro Department Store
Baranggay Upper Carmen, Cagayan De Oro City

or email us at

Recruit.SM.HO@sm-shoemart.com

(Please bring comprehensive resume, 2 pcs. 2x2 colored picture with white background, SSS Number / SSS Employment History printout plus original and photocopy of Transcript of Records and Diploma)

PHOENIX LAND

PHOENIX LAND INC. is a premiere real estate company engaged in developing high-end residential and resort projects. Our flagship project is **Las Haciendas Resort Farms**, an exciting 342-hectare resort-farm project in Laurel Batangas facing the scenic Taal Lake and volcano.

We are currently in need of the following for immediate employment:

MARKETING SUPERVISOR
- Must posses a Bachelor's/College degree in Sales & Marketing/Mass Communication/Advertising/Media or equivalent degree
- Must posses a proven track record in Marketing for at least 5 years
- Experience in tri-media marketing an advantage
- Team player and able to work in a challenging environment

PROJECT ENGINEER
- Graduate of Civil Engineering
- Preferably 28-40 years of age
- Must have 5 year work experience
- Knowledge in Vertical and Horizontal Development (Including surveying works)
- Know how to prepare documentation
- Willing to work outside Metro Manila
- Willing to render overtime

SECRETARY/RECEPTIONIST
- Must be a graduate of any 4 year course, preferably Mass Communication or Business Management
- Must have at least 6 months work experience in the same field
- Must possess excellent communications and interpersonal skills
- Should have pleasing personality
- Must be between 21-25 years old
- Proficient in MS Office applications
- Can relate well w/ all levels of the organizations and clients

Please submit your resumé with 2x2 picture @ 11/F BDO Plaza, #8737 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City and look for Ms. Vangie Ramos. You may also email your resumé at ehramos@lashaciendas.com.ph / yangieramOs@yahoo.com. For other details contact 8128490, or 8125059.

NTCM NMFPI

NORWEGIAN TRAINING CENTER-MANILA

Is in need of a

ONE (1) BRIDGE SIMULATOR INSTRUCTOR
TWO (2) DYNAMIC POSITIONING (DP) SIMULATOR INSTRUCTORS

Who Are We?

The Norwegian Training Center-Manila of the Norwegian Maritime Foundation of the Phils., Inc. (NMFPI) was founded in May 1990 for the purpose of ensuring competent training and to promote quality shipping.

We offer varied courses from Ship and Cargo Handling; Management; Technical; Safety Courses; Welding; and Culinary Courses.

Our faculty of Norwegian, Australian and Filipino mariners is trained to teach with confidence, aided by modern teaching aids and methods.

What We Are Looking For?

For Bridge Simulator Instructor:
1. Preferably non-seagoing.
2. Experienced Master Mariner.
3. Willing to be trained as instructor in Trondheim, Norway.

- We offer competitive salary for successful applicant.

For DP Simulator Instructor:
1. Certified Dynamic Positioning Operator (DPO)
2. Seagoing or non-seagoing instructors.
3. Willing to be trained as instructor in Trondheim, Norway.

- We offer competitive salary for successful applicants.

For applications please contact:
Capt. Rex O. Recomite, Training Manager
E-mail Address: training.manager@ntcm.com.ph

Address:
Norwegian Training Center-Manila
NTC-M Building, Gate 2 TESDA Complex,
East Service Road, Taguig, Metro Manila
Tel. No. : 812-07-42
Website : www.ntcm.com.ph
E-mail : ntcm.registrar@ntcm.com.ph

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We are looking for motivated individuals with strong communication skills, solid customer service / sales orientation. Highly personable and is a good conversationalist. Details-oriented and willing to work graveyard shifts.

Earn anywhere between P20,000 to P50,000 a month!

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1024 Epifanio Delos Santos Avenue (EDSA)
Quezon City

Email: careersph@vxi.com

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UNDP

The "Philippines: Capacity Building to remove Barriers to Renewable Energy Development (CBRED) Project", funded by Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and implemented by the Department of Energy (DOE) is in search of qualified candidate for the post of **MSC Technical Support Specialist** to be based at the DOE Office in Taguig City.

MSC Technical Support Specialist

Technical Accountabilities:

Primary Responsibility

1. Responsible for ensuring the provision of technical advise and assistance to the operation of the Market Service Center (MSC)

Specific Responsibilities

1. Identify technical information requirements and provide technical advise and establish information networks to meet the identified requirements
2. Responsible for the planning, management and maintenance of CBRED technical information projects to include among others: Resource Inventories throughout the Philippines, RE Engineering Service Industry Development, and Technical Assistance to RE Manufacturers
3. Conduct environmental scan to identify opportunities for project development in the RE sector
4. Conduct pre-feasibility studies as defined by relevant document of the management system
5. Coordinate the conduct of feasibility studies
6. Conduct and/or coordinate market studies to identify potential services and/or products of the MSC
7. Liaise with clients, project developers and other stakeholders to pursue the realization of the goals, objectives and targets set in the annual business plan
8. Review the performance of major suppliers or services and products that are crucial in the attainment of the mission statement and annual goals and objectives
9. Responsible for implementing document control policies for assigned projects
10. Responsible for implementing policies regarding control of records for assigned projects
11. Perform other tasks as may be directed by the MSC Coordinator

Qualifications:

1. University degree in Science or Engineering, preferably with an advanced degree in the said fields
2. Minimum of three (3) years of relevant experience in project development and financial management
3. Proven track record in project management, especially in meeting deadlines, timely submission of acceptable deliverables
4. Minimum five (5) years experience in government or industry on program formulation, implementation and management
5. About three (3) years working experience in renewable energy industry with a broad experience in a range of renewable energy system technologies and grid / off-grid applications
6. Proven track record in technology transfer and capacity building for client groups.

All application letters and comprehensive resumés should reach our office on or before 12 January 2007. Address applications to the Development Support Services Center, United Nations Development Programme, 30th Floor, Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Avenue corner Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City.

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We are one of the world's premier providers of content and knowledge management of information providers, online publishers, and global companies. We put premium on the quality of information being processed custom-tailored to the client's specific content delivery requirements.

If you possess the following requirements, you are exactly the candidate that we are looking for:

DEPUTY PROJECT MANAGERS

Responsibilities:

- Lead the knowledge transfer process from customers in the US to other Editorial Operations in the Philippines
- Serve as client liaison to ensure that certain procedures and guidelines are fine-tuned to meet the client's performance and quality standards
- Monitor short and long-term goals of assigned project and tracks deliverables and milestones related to its successful implementation

Requirements:

- Master's or Bachelor's degree from a reputable school
- Strong project management skills
- Capable of meeting complex and dynamic production requirements
- Comfortable dealing with international clients and multi-cultural environments
- Experience in managing legal editorial processes including books, treaties, loose-leaf, or legal research databases is an advantage

TAX COMPLIANCE OFFICER

Responsibilities:

- Ensure compliance by the Company of tax, PEZA and BOI rules and regulations
- Oversee tax audits and claims for tax refund/credit
- Prepare tax memos/opinions on transactions with significant tax implications
- Review tax aspects of contracts entered into by the Company
- Coordinate with external auditors on new accounting standards and issuances
- Facilitate tax seminars and trainings to concerned personnel

Requirements:

- Graduate of Accounting, preferably CPA
- Knowledgeable in US and Asian taxation laws, rules and regulations

If you fit the above qualifications, bring or send your resumé to:

ESS Manufacturing Company Inc.
41st Floor PBCom Tower, 6795 Ayala Ave. Cor. V.A. Rufino St., Makati City
E-mail: recruitment@emci-phil.com • manila_recruitment@yahoo.com

For Immediate Hiring for a school to open in June 2007

PRINCIPAL
MARKETING MANAGER
TEACHERS

Principal
MA Education or Educational Management (related course), BS Elementary or Secondary Education (related course), with teaching experience, with work experience as Principal/Assistant Principal in a private or international school

Esl/English Teachers
BS/AB English graduate/Communication Arts/Journalism, has excellent ability in English, has excellent teaching skills

Pre-Elem, Elementary/High School Teachers
(Science, Math, English, PE [others])
BS in Elementary/Secondary Education, holder of PRC license, with teaching experience, has excellent teaching skills

Guidance Counselor
AB Psychology/BS Guidance Counseling, with experience

Librarian/Assistant Librarian
BS Library Science, with experience

Accounting Clerk
BSBA Accounting, CPA or non-CPA, with experience in accounting work

Registrar
BS Office Management/BS Computer Science/BS Information Technology - others, with work experience in the Registrar's office

School Nurse
Registered Nurse, with at least three years clinic/hospital experience

Marketing Manager
BSBA Marketing, with related experience

Office Clerk/Receptionist
BSBA major in Tourism/HRM/Travel Management - others, with related experience

PLEASE NOTE:
All applicants must have very good English communication skills.
Applicants from outside Pampanga must be willing to board in Angeles City.
Send your application letter (address to the School Director), resumé with picture and copy of T.O.R. to:

LIVING STONE International School
No. 43-B Marlim Ext. Corner Debra St., Pulong Maragul, Angeles City

Or send your application letter and resumé to this E-mail Address:
(jpmac93@yahoo.com)
Or call Tel. No. **(045) 8925337**

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Our dedicated Business Support Services professionals have worked with numerous multinational and local clients from various industries, completing both short- and long-term outsourcing engagements ranging from payroll processing to staff secondments or from bank reconciliations to full-scope accounting and record-keeping.

Manager / Supervisor, Business Support Services
(National Capital Reg - Makati City)

Responsibilities:
- Manage and supervise engagement teams that provide payroll and accounting services to various clients
- Supervise the preparation and issuance of engagement proposals
- Study the engagement requirements and draw up work programs and strategies
- Monitor the progress and performance of the members of the payroll and accounting engagement teams
- Review financial reports, tax returns, supporting schedules, and other deliverables

Requirements:
- A Certified Public Accountant
- At least 5 years experience in finance, accounting, and payroll services
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- Sound administrative and organizational skills
- Good leadership qualities
- Willingness to work long hours

Punongbayan & Araullo
19th Floor, Tower 1
The Enterprise Center
6766 Ayala Avenue
1200 Makati City, Philippines
Telephone 886-5511 ext. 724 & 728 (HR)
Fax 886-5511 ext. 722

NETWORK MANAGEMENT RESOURCES CORPORATION
POEA-483-LB-032904-R
LEAD AGENT - TAIWAN

URGENTLY NEEDED 200
FEMALE FACTORY WORKERS FOR TAIWAN
***A.S.E. CHUNGLI** Branch (Reg. no.10084629)*

Qualification:
20 – 28 yrs old, at least 155 cm. in height, 60 kg. below, College graduate, 20/20 vision, with or without experience. Ex- Taiwan Not Acceptable, Initial Screening is done daily at Unit 210 Vareb Mansion 1679 A. Mabini St. cor. Malvar St. Malate Manila. Main Office Tel: no. (02)4508290-92 Cell no. 09209528238, 09178994448,09178132665.

FINAL INTERVIEW
January 17, 2007 9:00 am

Venue: Auditorium 3rd Floor PEARL PLAZA Mall 0165 Quirino Ave. Tambo Parañaque City, Metro Manila. Pls. wear white t-shirt, jeans and close shoes during the interview!!!

Requirements:
Pls. bring 1 pc. 2x2 picture, photocopy of passport, NBI, Birth Certificate (authenticated from NSO)

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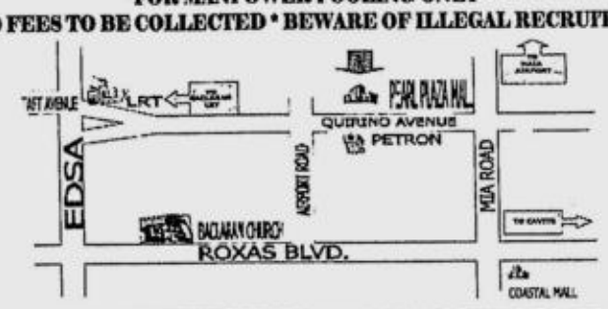

Media Monks Productions & Thinkpadd inc.

A young and dynamic company engaged in publishing, marketing and media production is looking for aggressive and passionate individuals to be part of our team. Candidates must possess a hunger for learning and a thirst for challenges. He/She must be able to fully utilize limited resources to generate overwhelming returns. As part of a team, she must be personable and cooperative. He/She will be encouraged to reach beyond her perceived limits and directly contribute to the company's direction and growth.

Unit 1902-C West Tower, Philippine Stock Exchange Center, Exchange Road, Ortigas Center, Pasig City
6875380 . 6873906 . 6343639 . media_monks@yahoo.com / thinkpadd_inc@yahoo.com

FOR IMMEDIATE HIRING!

(2) ACCOUNTS AND AD SALES EXECUTIVE
- Male / Female, not more than 30 yrs of age
- Marketing or Communication graduate
- possesses excellent presentation, negotiation and communication skills
- passionate, result-driven and agressive
- previous experience in sales, advertising or marketing an advantage

MARKETING AND EVENTS COORDINATOR
- Graduate of Management/Mass Communications or equivalent.
- At least one year experience in advertising and events handling.
- Previous work experience in the magazine industry is an advantage.
- Highly creative, persistent and customer oriented.
- Background in the alternative music industry is an advantage.
- Must be able to work well under pressure, self-manageable & self-motivated.

MARKETING STAFF (for Supermarket Client)
- Male/female 21-25 years old
- Retail/Marketing Management/Communication graduate
- with superior communication, presentation and negotiation skills
- can work effectively with a small team and under minimum supervision
- must be able to work, relate and speak with people from all walks of life

GRAPHIC DESIGNER / ILLUSTRATOR
- Male / Female, not more than 35 yrs of age
- graduate of fine arts or related courses
- proficient in free hand drawing and graphic design software
- comfortable in both Windows and Macintosh OS environment
- must be creative, concept driven and an efficient multi-tasker.
- knowledge in web-design an advantage

ACCOUNTANT
- Male / Female, not more than 30 yrs of age
- graduate of Finance/Accounting
- meticulous, organized and trustworthy

Interested applicants may email or submit their resumes at the above address & look for Ms. Stephanie Joy Gomez. Applicants for Graphic Designer must submit sample works.

AMERICAN DREAM GROUP OF COMPANIES

is in need of ***PART TIME LEGAL OFFICER...***
- Male or female
- Must be 30 – 50 years old only
- Preferably licensed lawyer but Non-pasesr is accommodated
- Can work three (3) times a week

Please call or text:
AMERICAN DREAM IMMIGRATION CONSULTANCY, INC.
Rm 701 Antel Corporate Center, Meralco Avenue
corner J. Vargas, Ortigas Center, Pasig City
Cellphone no. **0910-611-7194 – Beth**
Tel. # 687-0176 • 916-1878 • 916-1879
437-3496 • 437-3451

A leading engineering and construction company undertaking extra high voltage substation projects is in need of:

CIVIL & ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS

1. **WITH THE FOLLOWING QUALIFICATIONS;**
   - Licensed Electrical & Civil Engineers with at least 7 years of working experience in the related field.
   - Not more than 40 years old.
   - Computer Literate (AutoCAD, MS Office Application etc.)
   - Proficient in oral and written English
2. **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**
   - Construction Supervision and Management
3. **SALARY & COMPENSATION**
   - The company shall give competitive salary commensurate to the qualifications and experiences of the applicant.

Interested applicants may send their comprehensive Resume and Self-Introduction with picture not later than January 17, 2007 to;

Box Code KA-044-07 HE
c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer
Classifieds Division
G/F, Trinity Bldg., 636 T.M. Kalaw St.,
Ermita, Manila 1000

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LAWYERS
with 1 or 2 years of practice preferably graduates of Ateneo, UP, or San Beda

SECRETARY
female, pleasing personality excellent communication skills preferably fresh college graduate

MESSENGER
male, familiar with Metro Manila streets

Send application to:
The Managing Partner
5th Floor, COCOFED Bldg.
144 Amorsolo St., Legaspi Village
1229 Makati City
T: 813-1836, 813-4477; F: 892-0746
For lawyers, please submit sample written work.

FOR IMMEDIATE HIRING

4 SALES ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES
- Female 20-30 years old, College graduate
- New graduates are welcome
- High interest in Sales, Marketing & Accounting
- With good communication skills
- Pleasing personality
- Advance in computer operation
- Proficient in oral & written English

2 BRANCH ACCOUNT ASSISTANTS
(cashier & secretary)
- Female, 20-30 years old, College graduate
- New graduates are welcome
- High interest in Accounting
- With good communication skills, organized
- Pleasing personality
- Advance in computer operation
- Proficient in oral and written English

An equitable compensation and benefit package await any qualified applicant.
Those interested may send their comprehensive resumé and transcript of records with recent 2x2 photo not later than January 31, 2007.

La EUROPA CERAMICA
112-G Skyrise Compound
Old Samson Road, Balintawak, Quezon City
Email: robins@pldtdsl.net
Tel. 366-9662 / 366-9663
Look for: Ms. Chillany (HRD)

DIGITAL DATA CORPORATION

Urgent Requirement
Systems Developer/Programmers
- ✓ Male/Female not more than 35 years old
- ✓ BS in Computer Science/Information or equivalent
- ✓ At least 1 year experience in systems analysis and design
- ✓ Strong familiarity with Visual Basic, MSAccess. Must know basic database design/management using MSSQL
- ✓ Team Player and able to work independently with little supervision
- ✓ Willing to extend hours and travel

Attractive remuneration package for the selected candidate.

Report in person at DDC Main office:
50 A Malakas St., Barangay Pinyahan, Q.C, Tel. Nos.: 435-4300,921-3928, cp#: 0917-837389 or send resume at admin@digitaldata.ph

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We are an exciting production & enterprising company that inspires excellence in the field of home arts.

WE ARE NOW IN NEED OF THE FOLLOWING:

MARKETING / SALES EXECUTIVE
Full-time; Marketing or Communications graduate; Results-oriented, assertive team player, excellent people skills, analytical and highly reliable; Must have great telephone skills.

INTERIOR DESIGNER
Part-time; Female; Able to conceptualize & design a production set, Graduate of Interior Design or any related courses; Must have good taste; Works fast.

GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Full-time; Works with Adobe Illustrator, Corel Draw, Photoshop on MAC G5, free-hand artwork for magazine lay-outs and product design. Web design and HTML is a plus.

WRITER
Part-time; for magazine/catalogue/product brochure related to organizing home, school and office.

Send resumé to den@michellesimone.com or FAX 886-6812

The
Philippine Federation for Environmental Concern
(PFEC) needs an

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

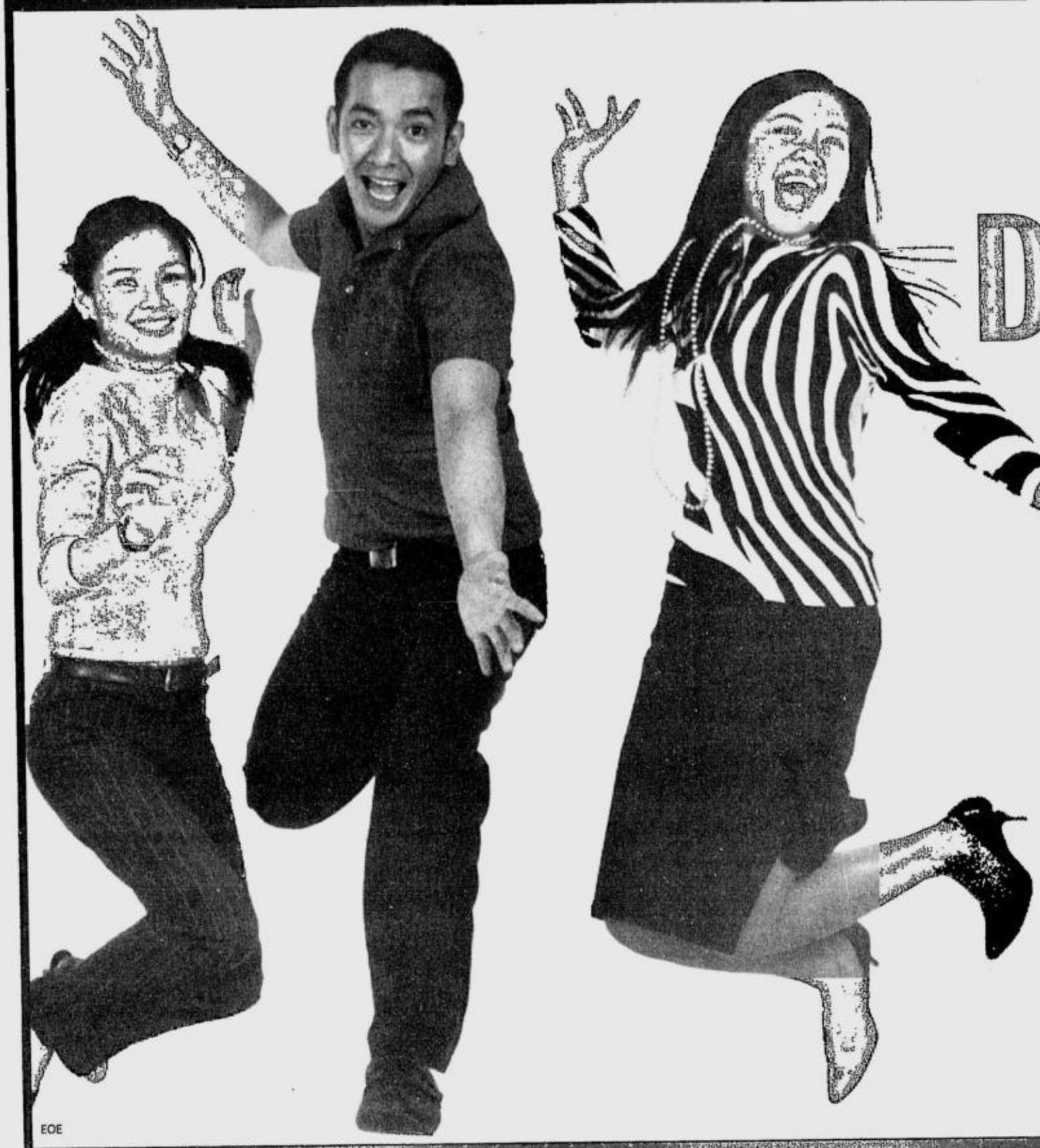
Interested applicants should contact PFEC at tel/fax # (02) 437-2088 or e-mail: **pfec@philonline.com** and send their letters of application and CV (with latest 2x2 photo) to the same address before noon of **January 31, 2007**

IMMEDIATE HIRING

Office Clerk
At least 4 year course, Computer literate, Female single/up to 30 yrs old.

Project Engineer
Licensed, male or female, single/up to 30 yrs. old

Submit RESUMÉ and credentials w/ 2"x2" ID picture:
400 Tandang Sora Ave., Brgy. Culiat
Quezon City
Tel. No. 9313258 • 9313678



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Mandaluyong City

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(located on 24th floor)
Don Chino Roces cor Sen. Gil Puyat, Makati

HR Employment Office
Phone: 857-7400
Fax: 857-7431/32
Email: MakatiJobs@west.com

West Contact Services, Inc.
westemployment.com

west

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(Code: SMMPPG-001)

- Graduate of any business or marketing-related course from a reputable university
- With established client network and strong background in the IT industry
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- Can effectively train, coach and manage a Sales Team
- With excellent interpersonal, presentation, negotiation, and persuasion skills
- Aggressive, results-driven and can respond well to pressure

HRD SUPERVISOR
(Code: HRDS-002)

- Graduate of any behavioral-related course from a reputable university
- Must be between 26 to 35 years of age with excellent interpersonal skill
- With at least 3 years experience in handling and supervising all areas of HRD
- With very good communication skills, both oral and written
- Self-starter, self-motivated, can work under minimum supervision and able to handle pressure

SALES REPRESENTATIVES & MGMNT. TRAINEES
(Code: ACMT-005)

- Graduate of business or IT-related course from a reputable university
- Between 21 to 28 years old with pleasing personality and strong leadership qualities
- With good command of English Communication, both oral and written
- Willing to travel, aggressive and result-driven
- At least one (1) year experience in sales is an advantage
- With high interpersonal, presentation, negotiation, and persuasion skills

A/V TECHNICAL STAFF
(Code: AVTS-003)

- At least a graduate of 2-year course on electronics from reputable schools
- Not more than 30 years old
- Willing to do field assignments and travel
- With at least one (1) year experience in repair of electronic equipments

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Primary Functions & Responsibilities:

- Direct and work on all activities related to the brand including ordering / buying, pricing, operations, product / merchandise management, advertising / marketing.
- Develop forecasts, analyze sales, inventory and profitability of the brand.
- Identify issues, recommend and implement necessary action plans to achieve goals and targets.

Qualifications & Requirements:

- A Bachelor's degree from a reputable college / university; Minimum of 3 years experience in brand management / merchandising / marketing / store operations.
- Exceptional oral and written communication skills.
- Clear understanding and knowledge in all aspects of running and handling a brand or business, including preparation and analysis of business reports such as profit and loss, sales projections, open-to-buy, etc.
- Proactive and creative; "Hands-on approach" to business. Very flexible and not reluctant to "roll up their sleeves" and get involved in all aspects of the business.

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Primary Functions & Responsibilities:

- Maintain computer network and infrastructure (PCs, servers, printers and network components) of the company; application system support and development.
- Develop, maintain and update web initiatives and online activities of the brand / company.

Qualifications & Requirements:

- Bachelor's / College Degree in Engineering (Computer / Telecommunication), Computer Science / Information Technology or equivalent.
- At least 2 years experience in the installation, maintenance, and repair of computers, network systems and electronic equipment.
- Familiarity with POS systems and various communication protocols.
- Experience with Web development.

STORE MANAGER / STORE SUPERVISOR

Primary Functions & Responsibilities:

- Build the business in the assigned branch by attaining sales targets, excellent customer service at all times, and ensure the effective performance of his/her team to optimum level.

Qualifications & Requirements:

- At least a Bachelor's degree and 2 years previous sales / retail experience.
- Proactive and has the ability to think conceptually, strategically, and analytically.
- Excellent organizational and people-handling skills.
- Willing to be relocated, work long hours, and during Sundays and Holidays.
- Proficient in both spoken and written English.

To apply for these exciting opportunities, please e-mail your resumé at **ahfela@havaianasphilippines.com** and please indicate on the subject line the position you are applying for. You can also send your resumé to Terry S.A. Inc., Unit 1902, 88 Corporate Center, Valero corner Sedeño Street, Salcedo Village, Makati City.

A Progressive Construction company is in need of the following:

Project Managers (CE) • Asst. Project Managers (CE)
QA/QC Engineer (CE) • Safety Engineer (CE)
Pollution Control Officer (CE) • Site Engineers (CE)
MEPF Coordinator (EE or ME) • Line & Grade Surveyor
QS/Estimator (CE) • Project Accountant / Administrative Officer • Plan Reviewer & Document Controller (Arch.) • CAD Operator

Applicants have the following qualifications:

1. Licensed Civil Engineer/Architect/Electrical Engineer/Mechanical Engineer (for technical positions)
2. Good technical, practical knowledge and experience
3. Good interpersonal, oral and written communication skills
4. NBI Clearance / Health Clearance
5. Resourceful, highly motivated and can work with minimum supervision
6. Achievement-oriented
7. Good Moral Character

Applicants for the following positions should have these added qualifications:

A. ASST. PROJECT MANAGERS
Licensed Civil Engineer, has extensive experience in vertical, horizontal construction & site development, previously employed as project manager for at least 5 years handling projects above P20M, background in ISO 9001 will be an added advantage.

B. FOR QA/QC / SAFETY/POLLUTION CONTROL/SITE ENGINEERS
Licensed Civil Engineer or Architect, has extensive experience in vertical, horizontal construction & site development, previously employed as site engineer for at least 5 years on projects above P20M, background in ISO 9001 will be an added advantage.

C. FOR AUTOCADD OPERATORS
BS Architecture / CE graduate, at least 2 years experience as CADD operator in construction or design firm, highly proficient in AutoCadd, MS Office, structural & architectural detailing, proficiency in quality / cost estimates would be an advantage.

Applicants who do not possess the above qualifications need not apply

Please bring resumé with recent ID picture (passport size) and NBI Clearance to:

METRO STONERICH CORPORATION
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FAX # (632) 413-98-98
www.metrostonerich.com
e-mail: metrostonerichcorp@yahoo.com

UPecon Foundation, Inc.

The **Health Policy Development Program** is a new USAID-funded, five-year initiative to assist the Department of Health (DOH) in its institutional role of shaping the policy environment towards achieving better health outcomes, a more responsive health system and equitable health care financing. The UPecon Foundation, Inc., the corporate arm of the University of the Philippines School of Economics, manages this Program.

The **UPecon** is looking for **TWO (2) TEAM LEADERS** to supervise policy development activities in the following program components: contraceptive self-reliance – family planning/maternal and child health (CSR-FP/MCH), and health care financing.

The team leaders shall perform oversight project management and monitoring functions for all projects under his/her respective program component. He/she shall be responsible for ensuring that all projects under his/her component are technically sound, coherent with the overall technical framework, and; achieve set targets and other deliverables. Likewise, he/she shall interact closely with the different Offices of the DOH, attached agencies and other Government Offices.

Applicants must have the following qualifications:

Position	Advanced Degree in	Years of Experience
Team Leader for CSR-FP/MCH	Public health and/or related health disciplines	At least 5 years experience in FP/MCH program implementation. Experience in LGU logistics management and procurement of FP commodities is an advantage.
Team Leader for Health Care Financing	Economics, public administration and/or related disciplines	At least 5 years experience in public health investments, public expenditure, health insurance

Compensation for the above positions is competitive.

Application letters expressing interest in the position together with curriculum vitaé should be sent to: The Chief of Party, Health Policy Development Program, UPecon Foundation, Inc., Room 322, PCED Building, UP School of Economics, UP Campus, Diliman, Quezon City or email to: **upecon.hpdp@gmail.com** or facsimile to: 436-3677 on or before January 26, 2007 (Friday). For any inquiry please contact the Business Management Unit (BMU) at the following telephone numbers: 436-3677; 927-9686 locals 321 and 322 or email to **upecon.hpdp@gmail.com**

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER — BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

SYSTEMS ANALYST / PROGRAMMER

QUALIFICATIONS:

- College degree holder in Computer Science or Computer Engineering with a business background
- 1 to 2 years experience as systems analyst / programmer
- Must have work experience in Powerbuilder, MS SQL 2000, Sybase SQL or other Relational Database Management System. Knowledge in Visual Basic, VB Scripting, Perl Scripting is an advantage.
- Can work with minimal supervision

NETWORK AND SYSTEMS ENGINEER

QUALIFICATIONS:

- College degree holder in Computer Engineering or Electronics and Communications Engineering
- 1 to 2 years experience in Networking and System Administration
- Must have knowledge of Linux, Windows 2000/2003 Server Administration and Development, Citrix Administration, TCP / IP Network, concepts in computer networking, e-mail and internet administration. Database knowledge is a plus.

ACCOUNTING GRADUATES

QUALIFICATIONS:

- College degree holder in Accounting
- With at least 6 months to 1 year experience in Accounts receivables and/or Credit and Collection work
- Knowledge of MS Word, Excel and Powerpoint
- Can work under pressure and with minimum supervision

DESK EDITOR

QUALIFICATIONS:

- College graduate major in Journalism or any Social Sciences course
- Must have 3 years experience in newspaper Journalism
- With at least 1 year experience in editing and designing / layouting pages

MARKETING SERVICES COORDINATOR

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Graduate of Marketing or Mass Communication
- 1 year experience on this job or jobs leading to it
- Knowledge of Marketing principles and strategies, Negotiation Skills, Creative Skills, Filing Skills, Communication / Interpersonal Skills
- Proficient in MS Word, Excel, Powerpoint and Photoshop

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

QUALIFICATIONS:

- College degree holder in Mass Communication or Journalism
- Knowledge of Pagemaker, Photoshop, or any related pagination or editing software
- Proofreading Skills, Encoding Skills, Scanning Skills, Layouting Skills

REPORTERS

QUALIFICATIONS:

- College graduate major in Journalism or Mass Communication
- Computer Skills, Communication Skills, Writing Skills, Interviewing Skills, Interpersonal Skills and Research Skills

Send your application letter and comprehensive resumé to:

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THE HR MANAGEMENT SERVICES HEAD
Philippine Daily Inquirer, Inc.
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Corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City
E-mail: recruitment@inquirer.com.ph

The Institute for Labor Studies, the policy research and advocacy arm of the Department of Labor and Employment, is looking for candidates with Professional Civil Service Eligibility and academic background preferably in Economics, Journalism, Communications, International Relations, Labor Relations, Law, Political Science, Social Policy, Sociology, Development Studies, Public/Business Administration, Statistics and other related courses, to fill the following vacant positions:

(1) CHIEF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT OFFICER – ILSB-CLEO-1-1998 (SG-24)
Basic Salary: P20,823.00 + P2,000.00 monthly allowance + P7,000.00 RATA
Qualification/Requirements:
- Master's Degree in any of the courses mentioned above
- Four (4) years experience in management and supervision
- Four (4) years work experience in social research
- Twenty-four (24) hours of training in management and supervision

(1) SUPERVISING LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT OFFICER – ILSB-SVLEO-2-1998 (SG-22)
Basic Salary: P19,251.00 + P 2,000.00 monthly allowance
Qualification/Requirements:
- Bachelor's Degree in any of the courses mentioned above
- Three (3) years work experience in social research
- Sixteen (16) hours of relevant training

(1) SUPERVISING ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER – ILSB-SADOF-1-2004 (SG-22)
Basic Salary: P19,251.00 + P2,000.00 monthly allowance
Qualification/Requirements:
- Bachelor's Degree in any of the courses mentioned above
- Three (3) years work experience preferably in planning, accounting & budgeting, human resource development, and procurement
- Sixteen (16) hours of relevant training

(1) SENIOR LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT OFFICER – ILSB-SRLEO-7-1998 (SG-19)
Basic Salary: P16,792.00 + P2,000.00 monthly allowance
Qualification/Requirements:
- Bachelor's Degree in any of the courses mentioned above
- Two (2) years work experience in social research
- Eight (8) hours of relevant training

(1) INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY OFFICER I – ILSB-ITO1-1-1998 (SG-19)
Basic Salary: P16,792.00 + P2,000.00 monthly allowance
Qualification/Requirements:
- Bachelor's Degree in any of the courses mentioned above
- Two (2) years work experience in publications, information technology and social research
- Eight (8) hours of relevant training

(2) LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT OFFICER III – ILSB-LEO3-3-1998 and ILSB-LEO3-4-1998 (SG-16)
Basic Salary: P14,098.00 + P2,000.00 monthly allowance
Qualification/Requirements:
- Bachelor's Degree in any of the courses mentioned above
- One (1) year work experience in social research
- Four (4) hours of relevant training

Qualified applicants may send their comprehensive resumé to the address below not later than January 19, 2007.

Office of the Deputy Executive Director
Institute for Labor Studies
5th Floor, DOLE Building, Gen. Luna St., Intramuros, Manila
Tel. Nos. 527-35-22 and 527-3511; Fax No. 527-34-91; Email: larrydizon@ilsdole.gov.ph

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- Male/Female, not more than 30 years of age;
- Preferably a graduate of any of the following courses: Marketing, Advertising or Mass Communications; or any Medical Related Course;
- With pleasing personality and above-average oral & written communication skills;
- Must be computer literate and willing to do fieldwork.

MEDICAL /X-RAY TECHNOLOGISTS / NURSES

- With pleasing personality and above-average communication skills.
- No work experience required.

LIAISON OFFICERS

- Male/Female; not more than 30 years old;
- Preferably graduates of any medical related course;
- Good communication skills; pleasing personality and must be customer service oriented;
- Willing to be assigned in Laguna area.

GENERAL CLERKS

- Female not more than 30 years old;
- Graduate of any business course;
- Personable, with good communication skills;
- Must be computer literate.

Interested applicants are requested to submit their resume, transcript of records and 2x2 photo at:

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8/F The World Center
330 Senator Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City
Email Address : hlusanez@medicardphils.com

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• 3rd Engr	from US$2,640.-	10 mos. Contract
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e-mail: recuitment@crewserve.com.ph
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Galant Maritime Services, Inc.
1101 Ermita Center Building
1350 Roxas Boulevard,
Ermita, Manila
PIC: C/M Norman Miranda
PIC: C/M Chito Mendoza
e-mail: norman@galant.com.ph
POEA Lic. 108-SB-091603-R

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Position Available:

1. **CIVIL ENGINEER** - Licensed
2. **ACCOUNTING STAFF** - Female; with 3 years experience
3. **SECRETARY** - Female; any four year course
4. **GRAPHIC ARTIST** - Fine Arts gradute; to submit sample of works

Business Unit : Aseana Holdings Inc.
Contact Person : Mr. Andrew M. Taningco
Contact No. : 854-5711
Instructions : Interested applicants can send their resumés to the specified contact person at the 3/F Aseana Powerstation, D. Macapagal Ave., Aseana Business Park, Parañaque City or send them via email to aseanabusinesspark@yahoo.com

Qualifications:

- 21-30 years old
- Must possess Excellent Communication and Organization Skills
- Must be Computer Literate
- Must be customer and people oriented

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- Equip with the following competencies: Analytical Skills, Negotiating Skills, Interpersonal Skills, Planning and Organizing, Decision Making, Policies and Procedures, Sense of Urgency and Time Management, People Management Skills, Leadership Skills
- With basic knowledge of computer operations

Interested applicants should send their application letter and comprehensive resumé to:

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

THE HR MANAGEMENT SERVICES HEAD
Philippine Daily Inquirer, Inc.
Chino Roces Avenue (formerly Pasong Tamo)
Corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City
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- Must be willing to work on shifts

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- Delivers Individualized Customer Experiences by focusing on finding hotel accommodations that will best fit our guests needs

Requirements
- Must be a Bachelor/College degree holder
- Must have excellent written and verbal communication skills with one of the following languages: English, Spanish or Japanese
- Customer service and/or sales experience an advantage
- Education and experience in the hospitality or IT industry an advantage
- Must be willing to work on a rotating shift
- Fresh graduates are encouraged to apply

* *Japanese-speaking CSR's must be a native speaker and will be working on day shift*

Reporting Analysts

Job summary
- Supports strategic and tactical marketing and business issues for global clients
- Provides analytical support on operational and program structure issues for marketing programs
- Provides analysis and reporting for ongoing and adhoc projects
- Assists in compiling lists of email and direct mail recipients based on statistical models built by senior consultants using SAS querying tool

Requirements
- Must have a degree in Business, Marketing, Statistics, Economics or related field
- At least 2 years working with relational decision-support databases (preferably a data warehousing environment), along with demonstrated quantitative skills
- Strong experience with SAS and SQL
- Must be able to prioritize and handle multiple projects
- Must be able to communicate technical information to non-technical audiences
- Must be able to work with minimal supervision

Business Objects/SAS Analysts

Job summary
- Performs periodic updates on Business Objects Web Intelligence data
- Delivers regular Dashboard reports and Business Objects ad-hoc queries
- Provides analytical support on data issue researches

Requirements
- Must have a degree in Business, Marketing, Statistics, Economics, Computer Science or any related field
- At least 2 years working with relational decision-support databases (preferably a data warehousing environment), along with demonstrated quantitative skills
- Strong experience with SAS, SQL and Business Objects
- Must be able to prioritize and handle multiple projects
- Must have good communication skills
- Must be able to work with minimal supervision

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- Must have an impressive sales track record
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- Hardworking, resourceful, innovative, aggressive

Qualified applicants are required to bring their resumé with 2x2 photo at:
91 B.G. Roxas St., Quezon City
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WORKING PEOPLE

SUNDAY, JANUARY 7, 2007

E-mail: workingpeople@inquirer.com.ph.

Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

Text us your feedback: Inquirer paw name/city/message. Send to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

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By Aya V. Jallorina
Contributor

THE FIRST THING THAT LEAPS into your mind when you hear the words, "You're hired, when can you start?" is to accept the job right there and then. Negotiate instead.

Negotiating doesn't mean you're trying to play "hard-to-get." It means being professional. It is a smart thing to do today.

Thousands are unemployed and looking for jobs. The tendency is of course for you to readily grab the offer to work because if you don't, a long queue of applicants might spirit away that prospective job.

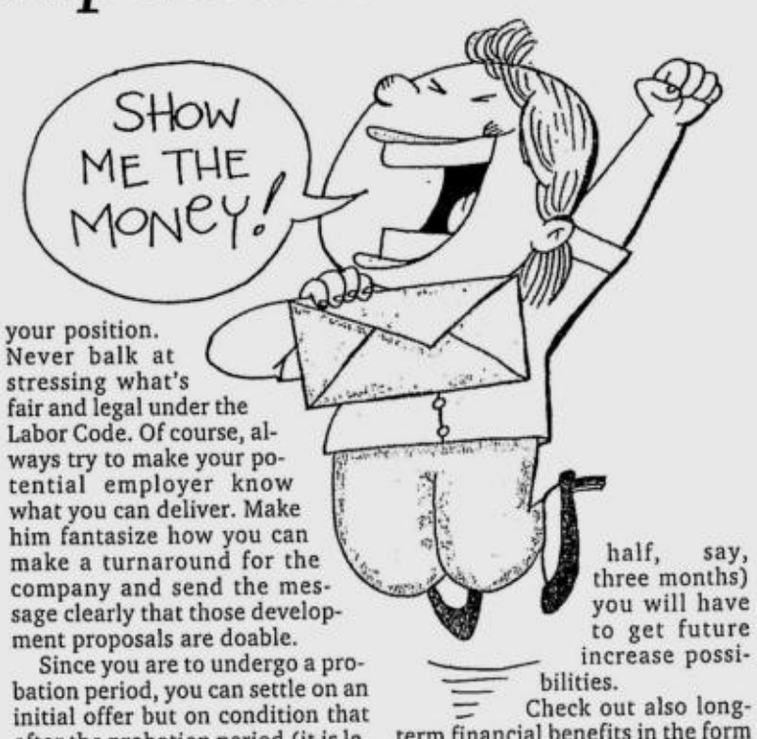
But fear not. Employers don't just hire just because they need to hire. Even with an oversupply of applicants, hiring employers are cautiously screening resumés, looking for the best. They want real talents and admittedly, there is a shortage in this arena. If you are a fresh graduate from a good school armed with good credentials, you have a bargaining power. But so do you when you have experience and talent.

Negotiating doesn't mean gouging your employer for inflated wages. It does mean exploring every aspect of employees' compensation and arriving at best deals possible. Prior to negotiating, you must do some research on pay benefits in your line of work. Present this to your prospective employer in a professional manner and with a positive spirit and you'll end up rightly compensated. Ignore this and you could end up bemoaning being employed but discontented.

The sensible approach is not to name your price to a potential employer.

Allow him to make the offer instead and then try to analyze if the offer is reasonable, decent, legal and commensurate to what you can "bring to the table." In most cases, if you come in too high, you may not get the job; if you come in too low, you devalue yourself.

If the offer is too low, present the market salary range to support your position.



Never balk at stressing what's fair and legal under the Labor Code. Of course, always try to make your potential employer know what you can deliver. Make him fantasize how you can make a turnaround for the company and send the message clearly that those development proposals are doable.

Since you are to undergo a probation period, you can settle on an initial offer but on condition that after the probation period (it is legally six months but you can negotiate to cut the appraisal time in half, say, three months) you will have to get future increase possibilities.

Check out also long-term financial benefits in the form of profit-sharing, stock option or stock purchase plans. Group insurance, savings and investment plan offers by the company are other income boosters.

Aside from salary, you can also negotiate for a professional development budget if you can. Some generous companies will pay for their employees to develop their skills especially if the same is job-related. Do this by drafting a list of programs you'd like to attend; justify the cost in terms of payoff to the company. For example, you can enroll in desktop publishing so that if you have a company newsletter, the company need not send the draft to a production staff. Saves time and resource for the company.

More importantly, negotiate your work schedule. Nothing beats the freedom to work on a flexible time. While some companies still live by the time clock, high technology have eased the way for many to offer more flexible work schedule such as working from home for a couple of hours, days or even weeks. Your manager will not hesitate to allow you flexible time especially when you are able to successfully present to him a detailed plan for the kind of work you'll do from home and how arrangement will not only benefit you but also the company.

Finally, put the deal on paper. Okay, so you got the good salary offer with its accompanying perks, it would seem a shame to sully this great moment of equanimity with a request to have the agreement in black and white. But do so anyway—it's a professional move. Because you see, there are unforeseen events, *force majeure* when the unexpected and unplanned occur. Like what if the manager who hired you suddenly leaves the company for another?

Of course it may seem distasteful or you may find yourself feeling uncomfortable asking for a confirmation letter. If that's the case, write it yourself and have the manager sign it. A lot of employees do it. I myself did it.

There's nothing wrong being proactive. Yes, indeed.

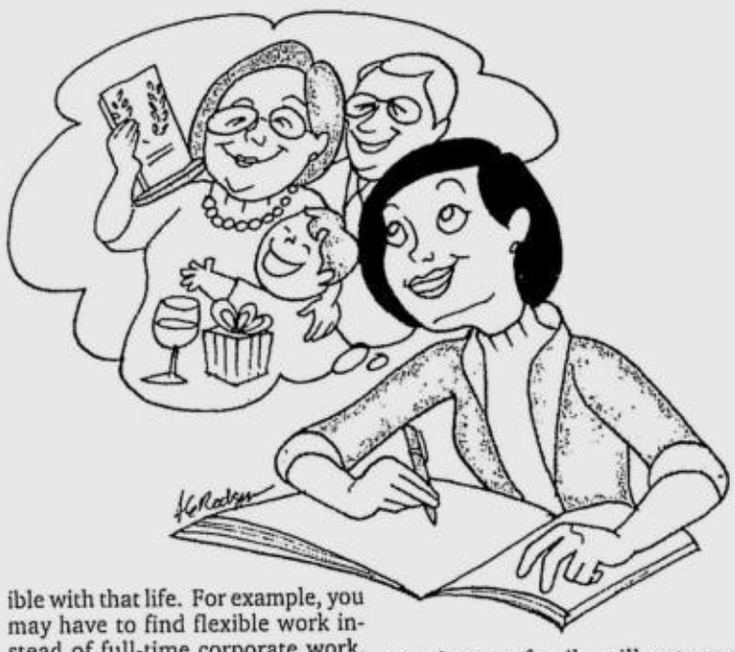
Motherhood is a career option

By Ma. Esther Salcedo-Posadas
Contributor

WHEN HOUSEWIVES ARE ASKED what it is they do, they often find it difficult to give a straight answer to their career-oriented friends. There is an unspoken stigma that being a homemaker may not be that respectable a profession, as if it meant that the lady had nothing much to do.

In present day society, people often equate the word "career" to a profession outside the home. Truth is, however, motherhood and taking care of a home is by itself a career option for married women. It is by no means an easy feat. Most women who stay home have to deal with so many inconveniences that many traditional career women would cringe at. The decision to stay home and take of care of children is really a vocational choice filled with much sacrifice.

For married women with very young children, a career in the home may be worth considering. It doesn't mean that you will not pursue intellectual or professional work. It simply means that at least while your children need you (which is probably for quite a while), you will choose to revolve your life around them. The work you choose to do will also have to be compatible with that life. For example, you may have to find flexible work instead of full-time corporate work. A lot of moms become small entrepreneurs as a result of such a decision. Of course, some mothers are perfectly happy just staying home. That, by itself, is not such a bad option. In fact, it is a career choice to focus on building a family.



Staying informed

However, staying at home doesn't mean doing nothing. It is important to stay informed and up-to-date.

Most women will attest that a one-income family will not work nowadays. Of course, if you choose to stay home you would need to assess your lifestyle as well. What are the things you can do without? How important are material things to you vis-à-vis your family's love and well-being? There will always be trade-offs when it comes to finding your calling in life.

On the other hand, staying at home does not mean that you cannot make your own money. In the current day and age, opportunities abound for women to start their own businesses and the like. The Internet economy has allowed many lifestyle changes for most people in the modern age. Take advantage of that. All of a sudden, the world is at your fingertips.

It is also important that you educate yourself about getting yourself into business. If you are used to being employed, it may take awhile before you get the idea of managing on your own. Most housewives end up in disappointment or boredom, not because there is a lack of opportunity, but really because many have failed to train their minds.

Try to discover your professional vocation. Many businesses start from hobbies. Get to know yourself and ask advice from women who have been there. Pray for enlightenment. After all, you only have one life to live.

Your children will grow up so fast you won't even notice it. Begin with your end in mind. Try to imagine yourself 30 years down the road. Instead of imagining your career success, take a little diversion, and try to imagine how you want your family and kids to love you back and take care of you. From that beautiful picture, work backwards and think how you can make that happen. Remember, love is paid back with love, not material things.

(The author is editor of Baby Magazine.)

'How can I leave my parents' business?'

ASK YOUR CAREER COUNSELOR
Josie O. Santamaria

I FELT ENCOURAGED TO write you for advice after reading the problem of Ms Career Wife and your advice to her in the Working People section of the Inquirer, dated Dec. 17, 2006. But, unlike her, I'm the one who desires to get out of corporate life, and devote my time to helping my husband in his successful law practice. I'm 45 years old, a law graduate and have passed the bar.

But my problem is I don't have the heart to leave my elderly parents who are both in their late 70s, as I manage our family business. I have been working with my parents for the past 15 years, after a stint in the government service as legal assistant. I am the only one who can take over the business for which my parents have trained me. My only sibling, a brother, lives and works in the US. My parents have worked hard to build this business and they were very happy when I voluntarily told them of my decision to help them. They are confident that I will build on what they had done and have introduced me to our clients as their successor.

But things have changed. My husband who has become a successful law practitioner, now wants me to join him as his partner because his client base is expanding. My parents had given financial assistance to my husband in putting up his law office and we are both very grateful for this.

I know my priority is my husband, but how can I tell my parents my decision without breaking their hearts?

Ms Wife in Dilemma

I can appreciate the conflict you are going through and the great difficulty you experience in telling your parents who had pinned their hopes in you that the business they had built and nurtured will be taken cared of by their lawyer-daughter. You also feel a big sense of gratitude to them for having given your husband financial assistance to set up his law office.

From your letter, I surmised that your parents had not put pressure on you to join them in the family business. This means that they had allowed you to exercise your freedom of choice. It is this attitude of theirs that you can rely on when you break the news to them of your decision to leave the family business.

You are sure of your decision to join your spouse and I agree with you. You are, however, unsure of your parents' reaction and are fearful of hurting them.

I suggest you write a script of what you will tell them so that you are in control of what you will say and how you will say it. If you are anxious about telling them directly, you may want to write them a letter, rather than give your message orally and in person. Make sure, however, that they get the letter and read it. Whether given orally or in writing, you may need to make the following outline of your "brief":

1. Thank them for the financial assistance they had given your husband in putting up his law office.
2. Express your gratitude to them for entrusting to you the family business that they had grown all these years.
3. Tell them that the law practice of your husband has flourished. He now needs you to help him by becoming his partner; that you welcome this as an opportunity to help your husband and, at the same time, practice your law profession.
4. You would always be available to help them manage the business but that the three of you need to identify a good successor to manage the business and that you would be around to oversee how the successor is running the business and to mentor him/her.

After telling them your decision, give them time to respond, perhaps after a month. Continue to work with them, then ask them for a meeting. Suggest that the three of you get a professional person to manage the business.

Such a successor could be a promising or high potential employee or an outsider with the technical background, leadership skills and management savvy to run the business. Such a successor must be brought in as soon as possible so the three of you can observe his or her work attitude, behavior and performance. You can mentor this person as you allow him or her to take more and more responsibility, accountability and authority as you lessen your visibility and involvement in the operations of the business.

If the person does not live up to your expectations during the probationary period, get a replacement. The important thing is that you are setting succession in place for a sense of continuity and stability of the business that will make an impact on your employees' morale and motivation, and your clients' continuous patronage.God bless you.

(Josie O. Santamaria is the president of Career Systems Inc., a management consulting and training company operating in the Philippines for the past 23 years.)

Gospel Mt. 2: 1-12

He sent them to Bethlehem and said, 'Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him,bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage.'

Searching for God

By Bishop Precioso D. Cantillas, SDB,DD

HEROD'S INSTRUCTION TO THE THREE WISE MEN TO "GO AND search diligently for the child" seemed so noble and inspiring, although he had an evil intention in mind in giving such an order. But if we focus on the bright side of this snapshot of the Gospel story, we would see that in the midst of some evil in man, there is still the inner desire in everyone to search for someone who would be some kind of a Supreme Being worthy of one's worship and homage. In fact, throughout history, several individuals or groups, impelled by such irresistible inner desire, have established their respective beliefs and ways of worship of this Supreme Being.

But perhaps it would help the mortal seeker of truth to consider that the object of his search, the Creator, has a much greater desire to bring His creatures back to Him than man's need to come back to his Creator. In fact the Almighty humbled himself and took on the form of a creature—man, a child, so that we, weak mortals could approach Him and be restored again to His original plan. The "newborn king of the Jews" has ever continued to draw both great men, like the three kings, and simple ones, like the shepherds, all to Himself. It is the challenge of everyone to accept the child-God and believe in Him and all that He has established here on earth.

The good news is that we can find this child-God also in our workplace and that our work done with faith and love for Him, is no less than a fitting worship and homage to Him who is so eager to give us His love and salvation. *(E-mail the author at mfvg@skyinet.net)*

REFLECTIONS FOR THE WORKING SOUL

A child's play

By Teresa R. Tunay, OCDS

A PHRASE IN TODAY'S GOSPEL STRIKES ME AS BEING BOTH RADICAL and realistic: "search diligently for the child." At work, when face to face with a nearly insoluble problem, how do you cope? Coping mechanisms and solutions to problems are numerous, but we can only vouch for those that work for us. One of the best ways for me is to "search diligently for the child" within. After I've done all I can to no avail, I leave the problem to that child in me. A child doesn't need to prove herself because she knows she can rely on her parents to solve things for her. Here's a concrete example:

At a leadership seminar we were given a puzzle to solve—connect the nine dots making only three turns without lifting your pencil. The objective was to see how creatively we'd solve problems. After laboring over the puzzle, everyone gave up but me. Reason told me it's impossible to do, but I told the speaker, "I'll sleep over it and give you the answer tomorrow." That night I said to myself, "This should be child's play!" And in that funny way one thing leads to another when you pray, I thought of the Sto. Nino—child's play *kasi, no*?—and actually demanded, but playfully, that He give me the answer in a dream. Believe it or not, I dreamed! Just a yellow kite fluttering in the wind against a clear blue sky. So pretty! Next morning I presented my drawing of the kite with a wavy tail and emphatically told the speaker, "Here—I won't tell you how I got it but I'm sure it's the answer!" (The truth is, I still didn't know how to connect the dots!) He smiled and proceeded to connect the dots himself; the resulting figure looked like a kite with a straight tail.

Luck? Coincidence? Not when it's been tried and tested countless times—searching diligently for the child within works. Herod sought The Child to kill Him; we seek the same Child that He may come to life within us. *(E-mail the author at teresa_de_manila@yahoo.com)*

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PROGRAM OFFICER – DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

The Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) is responsible for the delivery of Australia's Development Cooperation Program to the Philippines. AusAID is seeking expressions of interest (EOI) for several positions of **Program Officer (PO)** within the Development Cooperation Section of the Australian Embassy, Manila. The PO will contribute to the efficient and effective delivery of the development cooperation program through day-to-day management of ongoing activities and contracts, activity monitoring and reporting, quality policy input, and administrative support within a multi-functional cross cultural team.

Selection Criteria
The successful applicant will be a Filipino citizen with key qualifications such as good understanding of development issues and in-depth knowledge of key national and international agencies. Interested parties should have demonstrated contract management skills and effective work planning, organizing and resource management skills. Applicants should demonstrate a strong record of representational and interpersonal skills, including research and analytical skills. Experience and/or knowledge of program/project development and management, preferably in areas of either trade and private sector development, or rural development, health and education, or Mindanao and related regional peace and development issues, would be highly desirable.

Conditions of Contract
The Program Officer will be a full-time position available on a renewable two (2) year contract. The nominated person(s) are expected to commence within the next 6 months. The commencing salary is negotiable within the range of P50,000.00 – P56,000.00 per month depending upon qualifications and experience.

Expressions of Interest
Expressions of interest (one page), outlining briefly relevant experience and qualifications with reference to the duties and selection criteria for the position, should be sent to: **HR Officer, Development Cooperation Section, Australian Embassy, 23/F Tower 2, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Avenue, Makati City 1200** or manila.recruitment@dfat.gov.au by close of business **(COB) 19 January 2007.** EOI should particularly address the qualities and attributes the applicant would bring to the position, if selected. Please include a curriculum vitae, and two (2) work-related referral letters (preferably from current supervisor and addressing the criteria). Do not send copies of academic transcripts, awards, degrees, or published papers. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

Envelopes should be clearly marked **"PROGRAM OFFICER /AUSAID"**. Only those selected for interview will have their applications acknowledged.

Interested applicants are encouraged to obtain a copy of the Job Specification, which is available by emailing manila.recruitment@dfat.gov.au.

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Salary Range: **Php15,000 – 25,000 plus benefits**

Experience and Aptitude:
- Candidate must possess at least a Bachelor's/College Degree in Computer Science/Information Technology or equivalent,
- A minimum of 3 years experience with developing and delivering business computer applications,
- Hybrid experience with software development, systems, networking and operating system technologies are required,
- Demonstrable hands-on experience in software engineering processes in multiple hardware and software environments,
- Thorough knowledge of current and future technology solutions for the Internet; hand held devices; personal computers; and networks,
- Must be able to understand and clearly relate to other members of the organization, the business value of application development disciplines such as System Development Life Cycle, version control and software releases,
- Participate and lead various lifecycle stages including architecture specifications & design; application configuration; database design; programming; quality assurance; testing and implementation and ongoing maintenance and support,
- Lead and participate the support of a variety of software applications and systems that use various technologies including Microsoft.NET tools and MS-SQL database,
- Quickly learn business and manage end-user expectations and effectively manage time, resources and deadlines,
- Drive quality into the company culture by contributing to internal initiatives,
- Track record of successful, solution-based implementations utilizing .NET technologies including C# and/or VB.NET, ASP.NET, Web Services, ADO.NET, XML, Microsoft IIS, SQL Server and Crystal Report,
- Work with IT counterparts and managers to employ analysis and design techniques including case analysis, object modeling and database/application schema design to ensure business goals,
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FOREMEN-PIPE FABRICATION

As a member of the Pipe Department team the role demands basic knowledge on marine piping system, ASME B31.3 and associated piping classification code and standard. The successful candidate will also be expected to have a reasonable knowledge with the Classification Society rules or IACS for marine piping construction / design and be conversant with recognized safe working standard and practices; quality work standard. The ideal candidate should have a technical education or qualification from a recognized institution with a minimum 5 years experience in major shipbuilding / repair yard or oil & gas industries as a Piping Foreman or Leadman. This role also demands the ability to manage the assigned tasks independently with minimum supervision as well to manage a team of multiple nationality workforces.

FOREMAN- PIPE WELDING

As a member of the Pipe Department team the successful candidate will have basic knowledge on welding on different piping materials, related welding procedures and NDT and inspection procedures like Visual inspection, MPI & DPT .The role demands familiarity with the ASME Section IX and AWS requirements for pipe welding including awareness of procedures relating to handling welding consumables and heat treatment. The ideal candidate must have a strong background as a SMAW and GTAW 6G welder and be fully conversant with recognized safe working standard and practices; quality standards. The ideal candidate should have a technical education or qualification from a recognized institution with a minimum 5 years experience in major shipbuilding / repair yard or oil & gas industries as a Welding Foreman or Leadman.

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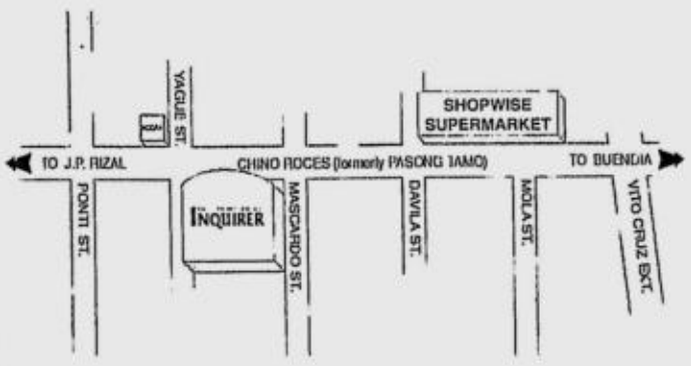

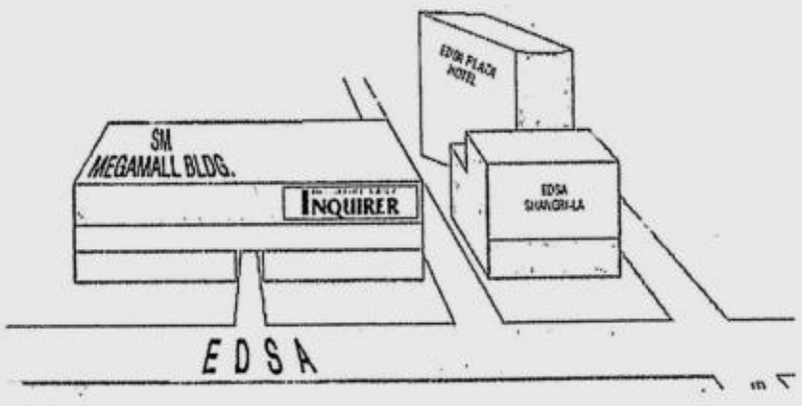

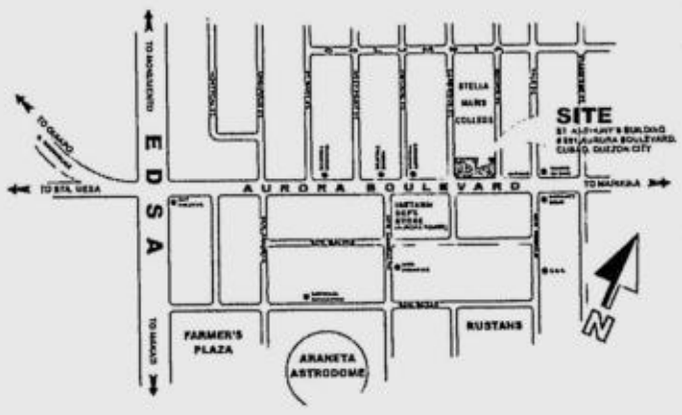

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ECOP rules out any compromise on legislated wage hike

THE EMPLOYERS CONFEDeration of the Philippines (Ecop) urged the Senate to junk the House-approved bill mandating a P125 per day across-the-board pay increase over a three-year period and adopt a "hands off policy" on the wage issue.

Newly-installed ECOP President Sergio Ortiz-Luis, Jr. ruled out any compromise on the matter of a legislated wage hike, especially at this time when the economy is reeling from fierce global competition and harsh domestic challenges.

"An across-the-board legislated wage increase undermines the viability of most enterprises in the country, particularly the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that are providing jobs and livelihood to millions of Filipinos," Ortiz-Luis asserted.

Ortiz-Luis noted that the P125 across-the-board legislated wage hike would accelerate the decimation of hundreds of thousands of micro establishments and the SMEs in the formal sector which, he said, would run counter to the flagship program of the Arroyo administration to promote and strengthen micro enterprises and SMEs as key generators of employment and economic dynamism in the value supply chain.

Ortiz-Luis bewailed that "moves to legislate a pay adjustment reflects the prevailing highly-populist orientation to continue increasing the benefits of the employed wage and salary workers in the formal sector in complete disregard of the stark realities of the Philippine labor market characterized by increasing chronic unemployment and underemployment, shrinking formal sector and an expanding informal sector."

He cited that from 1999 to 2003, employment in the formal sector dropped by 307,228 while employment in the formal sector expanded by nearly 2,000,000. The informal sector includes wage and salary workers in family-based or unregistered economic units, industrial homeworkers, the self-employed, and the unpaid family workers. The employment of most of these workers are insecure and they are vulnerable in as much as they move form one situation to the other.

"These should be cause for concern for policy-makers, as this pattern is inconsistent with the progressive increase of the labor force, employment, and of economic growth," Ortiz-Luis argued.

ECOP Chairman Miguel B. Varela said the efforts of the business community to keep the economy afloat would be put to naught due to the adverse implications of the wage hike bill, on top which are the astronomical costs of its full implementation, which would reach to as high as 1.2 trillion pesos based upon the total number of workers (12,262,000) in private establishments as of end-2005.

Ortiz-Luis warned that should lawmakers insist on a legislated wage increase, "more and more businesses would have no choice but to go underground."

BPO training academy conducts free orientation for Call Center applicants

BPO TRAINING ACADEMY, one of the newest contenders in the business process outsourcing industry providing customer relation management solutions to various industry sectors announces its ongoing free orientation to call center job applicants to be fielded to call center companies in the first quarter of 2007.

Company officials said that the orientations, free to the public, are a part of the dissemination campaign on the country's "sunshine industry" that is growing yearly by a hundred percent. Now the fastest growing call center industry in Asia, it has provided around 300,000 jobs since the new millennium, supporting the government's Medium Term Development Plan of creating 1.7 million jobs annually, by 2009.

The business process outsourcing industry refers to the outsourcing of large companies of some of their back-office operations such as accounting, contact center services, human resource administration and logistics to other companies for a fee. Based on statistics, the worldwide BPO market will reach US$173 billion in 2007.

Meanwhile, Philippine Trade Secretary Peter Favila noted that the worldwide BPO demand is driven mainly by the desire of foreign companies to focus on core competencies, improve service levels and reduce internal costs. In line with above, BPO Training Academy also announces its ongoing 100-Hour Finishing Course for Call Center Agents and Data Entry Training Program for high school and college graduates who want to pursue a career in the industry.

BPO Training Academy is located at the 4th and 5th floors of Adriatico Executive Center, 1920 M. Adriatico Street, Malate, Manila. For more information, call 5368834, 4501802, text 09166588888, or check www.studybpo.com.

IIP CERTIFICATION CONFERRED TO 13 PHILIPPINE COMPANIES. British Ambassador Peter Beckingham, Lopez Group of Companies Top Executive Manuel L. Lopez, EU Attache Rene Sieron, and PMAP President Lawyer Emerico De Guzman presented the ten (10) certified Investors in People (IIP) before the audience of PMAP 518th General Membership Meeting on Oct. 25.

UPGRADE 2007: The 17th UP Diliman job fair

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES DILIMAN OFFICE OF Counseling and Guidance and the U.P. Junior Philippine Institute of Accountants will be holding UPGRADE 2007, an event designed to benefit both companies and students by providing a common ground between the country's cream of the crop and leading companies. It is the 18th University Job Fair, from Jan. 22 to 26 from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. at the Ang Bahay ng Alumni, UP Diliman Campus. Students, especially those who are graduating, from UP Diliman, UP Manila, UP Los Baños, UP Extension Program in Pampanga and other colleges and universities are invited to this grand event.

The organizers will gladly welcome any inquiries regarding this event through the following: Tel. No./Fax No.: 926.4162 or e-mail and send your resumes to upjobfair2007@gmail.com.

You may also contact us through any of the following: 0927-3303691 (Beth), 0918-6160885 (DK), 0916-4460329 (Theresa), 0927-6064730 (Maila), 0917-6100684 (Kristy).

National sales rally set

START THE YEAR 2007 WITH A BANG! DON'T MISS THE NATIONAL Sales Rally dubbed as Exsellence Part 2–Conquering an Enemy called Average slated on Jan. 26, 2007 at the Holiday Inn Galleria.

The topics include The Selling Games; Inspiring Stories of the World's Greatest Athletes; Selling not just to Win But to Break Records; 10 Record-Breaking Techniques, Internet Marketing Magic, 6 Power Sources in Sales Negotiation, 7 Sales Negotiation Techniques, Quick Tips of Handling Price Objections, Clinch that Sale!

This national event is slated on Jan. 26, 8:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m. at the Holiday Inn Galleria. Organized by Porter and Miles Inc, a premier training company on business, management, marketing, sales and human resource development, with office address at Suite 2502-C Tektite Tower East, Ortigas Center. Jumpstart your new year. Recharge the batteries of your people and see them increase their sales. Sponsors for the National Sales Rally include the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Job Market, Business Mirror, Jobstreet.com, Holiday Inn Galleria, Avon, Yehey.com, Citibank, Disnmor Magnets, INQ7.net, Entreprenuers Society of the Philippines, New Synergy Garments, APCEI and UKDERM Pharma.

Handling BIR audit workshop set

FINALLY, A WORKSHOP THAT WILL REVEAL INSIDE INFORMATION on sure-fire ways to save money without compromising integrity. Don't miss this very important event slated on Jan. 17, 18, and 19, 1–5 p.m. at Holiday Inn Galleria Manila, Ortigas. CPE Credits will be given to CPA's.

Topics include Day 1: Letter of Authority; First, Second and Third Notice; Responsibility of Bookkeepers, Accountants. Auditors and Company Officers; Day 2: Handling of Report of Investigation; Notice for Informal Conference; Preliminary and Final Assessment Notice; Day 3: BIR Subpoena Duces Tecum; DOJ Fiscal Duces Tecum; Preparing Counter Affidavit; Prepareation of Rejoinder; Fiscal Resolution; Ruling of Appeal to DOJ; etc. Registering for one day only is allowed, but people are encouraged to attend the whole program.

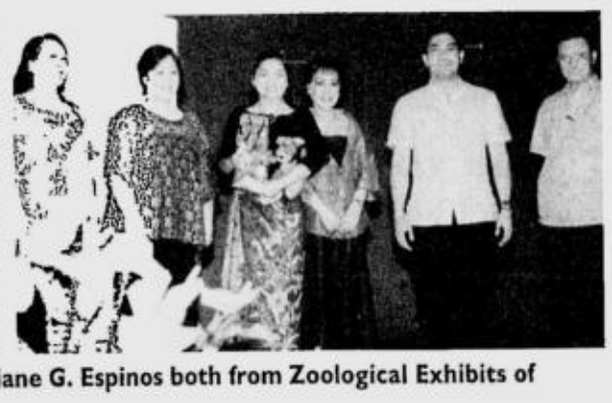
This seminar is sponsored by Porter and Miles Inc, a premier training company. For more information or reservation, please call Mercy at 638-7719/20. Hurry! Call us now while there are still seats available.

Awards night of the Ten Most Outstanding Members of the Workforce of Subic Bay Freeport Zone

Group picture with Guyito.

Shown from left are Lawyer Severo C. Pastor, president of the Foundation; Deo Amog, auditor; Mary Joy Lee, director, LMC Representative; Dr. Edith B. Geniza, Secretary; Awardee Leo Eusantos, Mondriaan Aura College; Ms. Lina Aseneta, Honorable Armand Arreza, Commodore Feliciano Salonga.

Thomas Eirween Davis and Roma Salvador, both awardees from Mondriaan Aura College.



Awardees Raphael Lugod and Bianca Christiane G. Espinos both from Zoological Exhibits of Ocean Adventure.

Mariano R. Musngi of Subic Water, is the head of Technical Services Division, distribution Network Management Department

Awardee Annabelle Martin, an employee of Wistron Infocom Philippines Corporation

Awardee Noemi Ong from Koryo Subic

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

CHALLENGE YOUR PASSION FOR EXCELLENCE!

BUYERS (for Corporate Office – Pasay)

Females, maximum 30 years old, degree graduates from reputable schools. Must be honest, articulate, aggressive & highly organized. Can stand the pressures & long hours that come with working in a dynamic organization. Related work experience is an advantage but not required.

STORE SUPERVISORS (for Metro Manila stores)

Males / Females, maximum 30 years old, degree graduates from reputable schools. Possess above average intelligence with excellent communication skills & innate leadership traits. Fresh graduates are welcome.

Interested applicants may apply personally on:

January 8, 10 & 11, 2007 (9am-11am) *at:*

SM Corporate Offices, **Building E**, 1000 Bay Boulevard, SM Central Business Park, Bay City, Pasay City

or e-mail applications to

svihrdrec@smsupermarket.com

For inquiries call HRD at telephone no. (02) 831-1888 local 5458

POWER BOOKS

is in need of dynamic and good team players to fill the following vacancy for our expanding branch operations:

Customer Service Associates • Book Associates • Cashiers

Marketing Manager: female, not more than 35 years old, creative, flexible, should have marketing background particularly in the field of PR, Media, Events and Advertising. Willing to work long hours and can meet deadlines.

Human Resource Manager: female, not more than 35 years old, HR graduate or any related course, has substantial experience in recruitment, compensation, and benefits.

Book Buyer: has a background in purchasing and merchandising of books, preferably Humanities, Literature, or Library Science graduate.

Branch Managers: male/female between 26-30 years old, college graduate with leadership qualities, articulate, with above average oral and written communication skills, service oriented and with good people skills, flexible, can work under pressure and with minimal supervision, willing to work on shifting schedule, weekends, holidays and enjoy reading books.

Please submit your resume (with 2x2 photo) at any Power Books branch or go directly at #25 Brixton St., Capitol Subdivision, Pasig City for possible interview.

IPSEN

Innovation for patient care

Marketlink International Corporation's IPSEN Business Group is in need of people who will be trained and tasked in an entry level, frontline position to promote high technology products as

MEDICAL REPRESENTATIVES

- Male/female, no more than 26 years of age
- Highly attractive with pleasant yet assertive personality, natural interpersonal skills, and strong entrepreneurial spirit
- Licensed pharmacist or graduate of a 4-year course, preferably but not necessarily in the health sciences or in marketing management
- Computer literate in MS Office (Excel, Word, Powerpoint)
- High critical and analytical skills with a strong grasp of details
- Exceptional planning and organizing skills
- Excellent English communications skills, both written and verbal with facility with Chinese or Cebuano, a distinct advantage

& PHARMACIST

The successful applicants can look forward to a challenging work experience in the pharmaceutical healthcare industry, including an attractive compensation, incentive and benefit package that includes regular travel around the country and abroad, with the opportunity to be part of the team that is pioneering a new business in the Philippines. **Interested parties should come in business attire with their comprehensive resumes and 2x2 colored photographs between 2:30pm to 5:00 pm on Tuesday, January 9 or Wednesday, January 10.**

Ms. Aimee CRESPO
Marketlink International Corporation
Suite 24.04, One San Miguel Avenue
Ortigas Center, Pasig City 1600
Telephone: (+63 2) 687 65 75

www.ipsen.com / www.marketlink.com.ph

FEMALE SALES COUNSELORS

HIRING IMMEDIATELY

Our business is growing fast. We are seeking additional dynamic and goal driven sales counselors who possess the following qualities:

- At least 30-35 years old, matured.
- Person to person sales or related front line customer contact with at least 5 years experience.
- Seeks high compensation levels based on performance.
- Works irregular hours including Saturdays with minimum supervision.
- College Graduate, Outstanding Oral and Written English Skills, Pleasing Personality, Computer Literate.

ATTRACTIVE REMUNERATION PACKAGE

Qualified applicants are requested to email or fax their comprehensive resume and a 2 x 2 photo not later than January 15, 2007 to:

THE SCHOOL DIRECTOR

John Robert Powers

International Since 1923

FAX: 8927657

EMAIL manila@johnrobertpowers.com

We are a 47-year-old company engaged in the manufacturing of construction materials such as Ready mix Concrete, Asphalt and concrete Pipes. We are also a **"AAA"** Contractor of Roads, Highways, bridges and Airpots. We are currently looking for candidates to fill up the following vacancies.

(3) Marketing Assistants (Tele-Marketers)

Female, College graduate with good communication and interpersonal skills w/ or w/out experience.

(1) H.R. Supervisor

Male/ female graduates of Psychology or related course w/ a min 3 years supervisory level experience. Background in a construction environment pref. but not necessary.

(1) Mechanical Engineer

Licensed M.E. with background in the operation of Asphalt, Ready mix and crushing plants. Minimum of 3 years supervisory experience.

H.E. Operators, Asphalt Paver Operators concrete pump operator.
H.E. Equipment mechanics, Laboratory Technicians

Interested Applicants may bring their resumé & clearance to:

The H.R. Department
Pacific Concrete Products Inc.
Rm. 302 - 3rd floor
#15 West Ave., Q.C./ MM 1100
pacific@itextron.com
Atop of Kamayan Saisaki Rest. beside Starbucks

TORM

TORM SHIPPING PHILS., INC.

IS NEED OF THE FOLLOWING:

1. QUALITY ASSURANCE MANAGER
Qualification:
- Male or Female
- not more than 40 years of age
- Maritime education graduate or related degree
- preferably with Shipboard officer experience

2. RECRUITMENT OFFICER
Qualification:
- Male
- not more than 40 years of age
- Maritime education graduate
- at least 2 years shipboard officer experience

3. FLAG STATE DOCUMENTATION OFFICER
Qualification:
- Female
- not more than 35 years of age
- preferably with B.S. degree
- at least 1 year related experience

Please send your resumé with photo in my email address written below. The resumé should include at least 3 references with contact numbers.

Mr. Ian R. Garcia - admin./Personnel Manager DL: 860-7508
Email Address: ian.garcia@tsmphil.com.ph
TSM HOUSE 1747 Dian St., Palanan, Makati City
Tel. No. 860-7500

CAREER OPPORTUNITY

Oxfam America

DEPUTY REGIONAL DIRECTOR
EAST ASIA OFFICE

Oxfam America is a leading International Relief & Development organization with offices across the developing world working towards long-term solutions to global poverty and injustice. The East Asia Regional Office (EARO) based in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, is currently seeking an effective & motivated individual to join the team as the Deputy Regional Director.

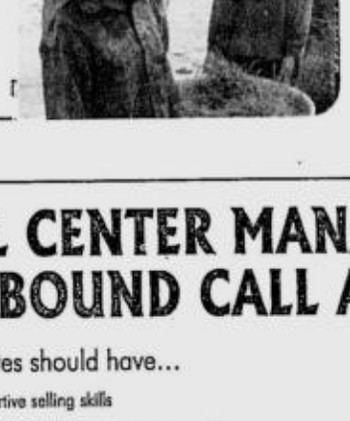
This position is responsible for essential support to programs in livelihood security, trade policy and governance, natural resource management & humanitarian response across Southeast Asia, particularly in regards to, vision & direction, program & administrative efficacy, organizational positioning & representation.
The full job description can be requested by email to easiasia@oxfamamerica.org or at http://www.oxfamamerica.org.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:
EDUCATION: Graduate degree in management or marketing, social or environmental science or relevant discipline, or equivalent experience.

EXPERIENCE & CORE COMPETENCIES: Seven (7) years relevant employment experience preferably in East Asia region with considerable field experience; Interest in rights issues & social change; demonstrable, effective experience in gender issues; experience in team management, leadership & facilitation, and ability to work well in a multicultural environment, communicating readily & sharing learning, the confidence to work alone & judge when help is needed; an excellent command of written & spoken English; knowledge of other languages of the Mekong region would be an advantage; and prepared to undertake extensive travel of up to 50% of time.

Applications Close COB 15th February 2007. Applications are to be sent by email with a CV and cover letter stating relevant experience & skills/knowledge.
Please write in the subject heading "APPLICATION FOR DEPUTY REGIONAL DIRECTOR POSITION".

Women and regional Nationals are strongly encouraged to apply.



A REPUTABLE SIGNMAKING COMPANY IS IN NEED OF THE FF:

- **Project Coordinator**
  - Male/female, 21 to 30 y/o
  - Preferably graduate of IE or any Eng'g course
- **Office Assistant / Data Encoder**
  - Female, single, 21 to 28 y/o
  - College level/vocational course/graduate
  - Proficient in basic computer software applications (MS Word, Excel & Internet Access)
- **Computer Graphic Artist**
  - M/F, Single, 21 to 28 y/o
  - Extensive knowledge in Adobe Photoshop 9 & CorelDraw 12 a must

All applicants must be highly-motivated, eager to learn, can work under pressure with minimum supervision. Preferably residents of Manila, QC & CAMANAVA areas only. Submit your complete resume in person with 2x2 photo to 176 Apo corner Malaya Sts., SMH, Q.C. (near Retiro/Mayon). Look for Ms. Lisa or Mr. Darwin.
For directional inquiries, call or text 0920-2661018.
Email: csi_apo@yahoo.com

We are a Manufacturing Company of Consumer Products with nationwide distribution & belonging to the Top 1000 Corporations.

We have vacancies for:

SALES COORDINATOR/SECRETARY

- Female, single, not more than 27 years old; College Graduate of any 4 years Business Course; Preferably with experience, computer literate; Must be honest, trustworthy and diligent

INTERNAL AUDITOR

- Female, single not more than 27 years old; Accounting graduate with good scholastic record; Must be proficient in oral and written communication skills; Must be computer literate

PURCHASING CLERK

- Female, single, not more than 27 years old; College Graduate of any 4 years Business Course; With good scholastic record, computer literate; Preferably with experience

SALES REPRESENTATIVES

- Male, single or married, not more than 30 years old; Graduate of Engineering or Business course; Must have good scholastic record; Must have good personality; Must be honest, trustworthy and diligent; Must be willing to do field work

SHIFT ENGINEERS

- Male, single or married not more than 35 years old; EE, ECE or Electro-Mechanical Tech graduate; Must be knowledgeable in trouble shooting and repair of motor controls and Electro-pneumatic system

Please apply in person or send your resume, transcript of records and passport size photo to:

ACS MANUFACTURING CORPORATION
U-1108 Antel Global Corporate Center
No. 3 Julia Vargas Ave., Ortigas Ctr., 1605 Pasig City
E-mail : acs.sec@eastern.com.ph

TRAVEL SALES AGENT

College graduate; 3 years experience in travel industry; GDS experience; Good in marketing & sales; Excellent in English, basic German a plus; Computer literate; Pleasing personality.

Submit: Application letter; Curriculum vitaé by 10 Jan to: KIRSCHNER Travel Manila, Inc – Fort Bonifacio
info@kirschnertravel.com
Tel. 8123198

CALL CENTER MANAGER / OUTBOUND CALL AGENTS

Candidates should have...

- ✓ Assertive selling skills
- ✓ Excellent English communication skills
- ✓ Strong customer service orientation
- ✓ At least 2 to 3 years of call center management experience calling in the US on outbound sales campaigns for call center manager position
- ✓ At least 1 year of outbound calling experience campaign in a US campaign for agents

and should be...

- ✓ Honest, reliable, dedicated and hardworking
- ✓ College graduate
- ✓ Male/Female (at least 25 years old)

ONLY THOSE WITH THE ABOVE QUALIFICATIONS WILL BE ENTERTAINED.

Bring your updated resume and drop by our office at anytime between 6AM to 12NN

Manager: PHP 40k plus

Agents: PHP17k plus

(inclusive of the 25% night differential, attendance & guaranteed performance incentives plus training for the chosen few)

National Relief Charities – Manila Center
U2504 Prestige Tower, Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City
Please visit our website at www.nrcprograms.org for more information.
You may also email your resumes at anytime to nrcagents@yahoo.com

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AMERICAN CHATLINK INC.

Read Everything Before Calling

HIRING EXPERIENCED – CHATTERS

Adult Internet Marketing Chatting with men from the USA
NO Webcam, NO Talking, NO Picture.
JUST STRICTLY chatting online. All you are doing is selling a **MEMBERSHIP** to an **Adult** website in the USA.
You will be fully trained

WALK IN AND INTERVIEW TIMES ARE:

Monday-Friday: 1:00 pm – 6:00 pm

FROM P10,000/MONTH UP TO P60,000/MONTH

What are the requirements?

MUST BE COMPUTER LITERATE. MUST have chatted on your own with YM, MSN, chat rooms for over a year. Will be tested in chatting ability

MEN / WOMEN APPLY, GAY MEN a PLUS

Location: 1210 Tycoon Center, Pearl Dr. Ortigas, Pasig
(Behind Octagon Bldg. by EDSA Shangrila and across from Tektite)
CALL 910-2827 Bring 2 valid ID's
AGAIN! It is STRICTLY FOR CHATTING
CLIP THIS AD WITH YOUR RESUMÉ

FULL- & PART-TIME JOBS

FREELANCE ARTIST with experience in newspaper, magazine and annual report layouts. Contract basis. Pls. bring portfolio.

MARKETING REP, personable and articulate female, for sales work to corporations, gov't agencies, associations, etc.

Contact **EXECEDIT** at tel. 887-3797 or 98, fax 887-3796 or email **execedit@mozcom.com**

JOB Market COMPACT

Get more exposure for your ad. Advertise in JobMarket Compact.

Inquire about the JobMarket package at 897-8808 loc 514.

Inquirer Compact available in all key cities in Luzon.

JOB Market

URGENT REQUIREMENT

- 3 Female Telemarketers with at least 6 months experience on marketing services/ events. Must be willing to work in Ortigas, Makati or Q.C.
- 1 administrative secretary knowledgeable in Microsoft Office

Applicants are required to submit their resumé/CV to Suite 2514 Medical Plaza Ortigas, 25 San Miguel Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City not later than January 10, 2007.

MAKATI BASED CORPORATION DIRECT HIRING!!!

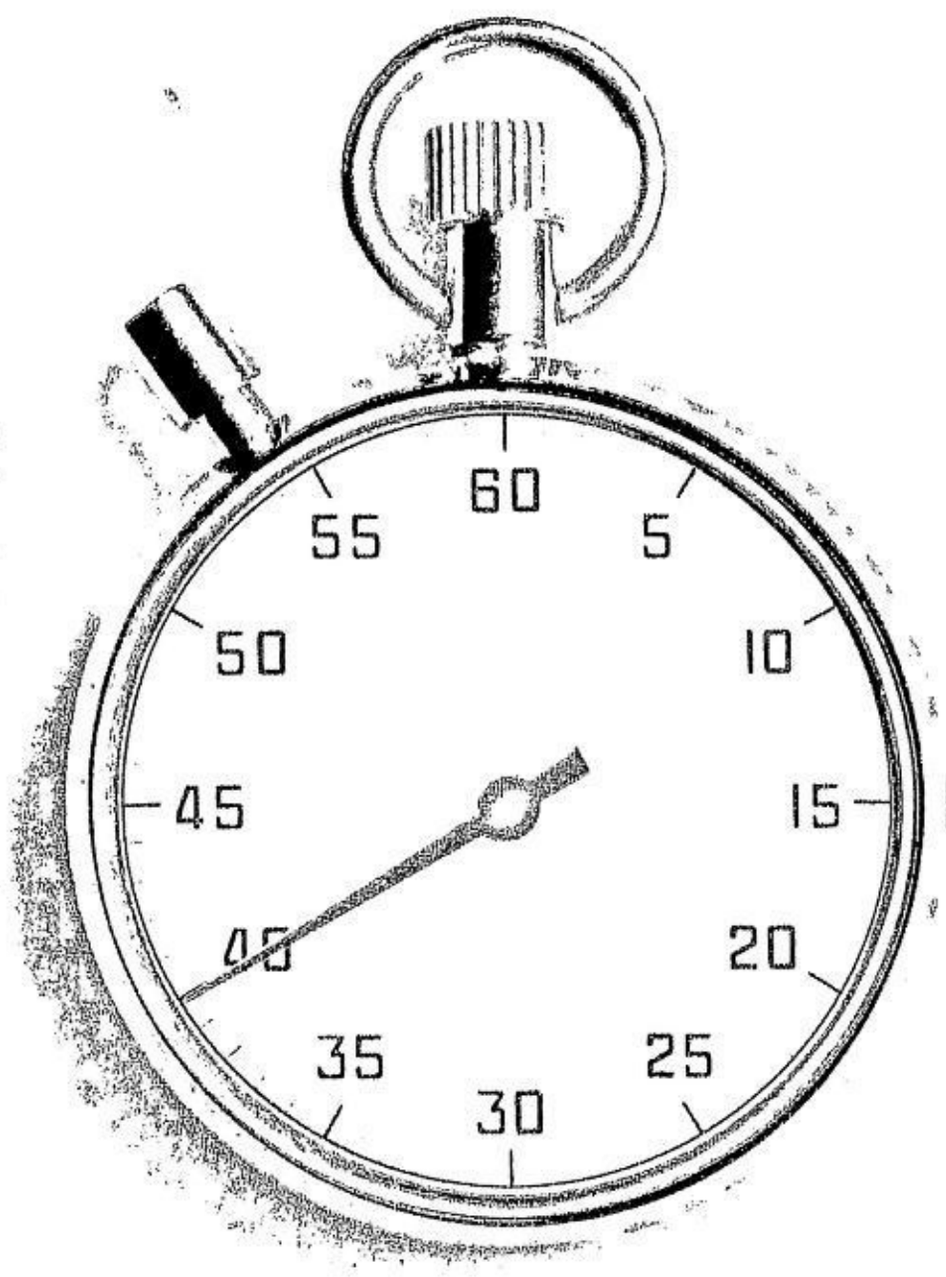
OFFICE STAFF
MGT. TRAINEES
MANAGERS

College Graduate or Undergraduate of any Course
Male or Female / Single or Married / Age: 19 - 38 years old

Look for Ms. Vannie
849-A LOYOLA Bldg. Ground Floor, Arnaiz Avenue, Pasay Road, Makati City

Prove yourself.

Pre-qualify in 40 minutes and get hired on the same day as a customer contact agent at Accenture!



Come to our in-house job fair from Jan 8 to 12, 2007 or take our on-line test today. You have till January 31, 2007 to avail of the P15,000.00 automatic signing bonus. So, sign up now!

We know the importance of creating the right environment for success. At Accenture, you can develop your skills faster than almost anywhere else. We're one of the world's leading management consulting, technology services and outsourcing companies and we help our clients become high-performance businesses. We're now building a customer contact services team in the Philippines and we want talented people to join us.

Customer Contact Agents.

Whether you are a call center professional, someone looking for a new challenge or a recent college graduate, get your career off to a great start.

We're looking for 4-year degree holders with excellent communications skills for our inbound and outbound contact center operations. As a customer contact agent for our ISP client, you will provide technical support and handle billing inquiries. For those with outbound or financial services experience, you can be part of a pioneer account performing outbound collections and inbound customer service for a UK based utilities company.

At Accenture, you will be given diverse career options and learning opportunities to help you realize your full potential. Once hired as a customer contact agent, you will receive comprehensive training to prepare you to work at the highest level of efficiency. And as you grow in the organization, you'll enjoy the benefits of a continuous learning program to help you develop specialized skills and facilitate your personal and leadership growth. On top of these, you will receive a competitive total rewards package, including pay-for-performance incentives.

Visit our job fair from Jan 8 to 12, 2007, 10am to 3pm at 3rd level, Robinsons Pioneer Mall, Pioneer St., Mandaluyong City. You could walk away with a new job on the same day!

For more information, please call or text us at 0917-8876532.

Visit www.accenture.com/40minutes

• Consulting • Technology • Outsourcing

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High performance. Delivered.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

INQUIRER COMICS Sunday

JANUARY 7, 2007

1

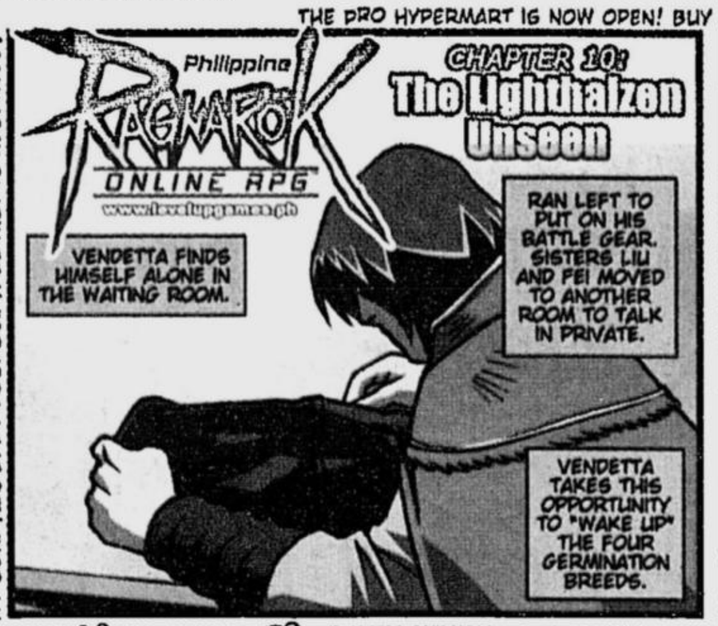
sms feedback: inquirer life name/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 386 (Smart)

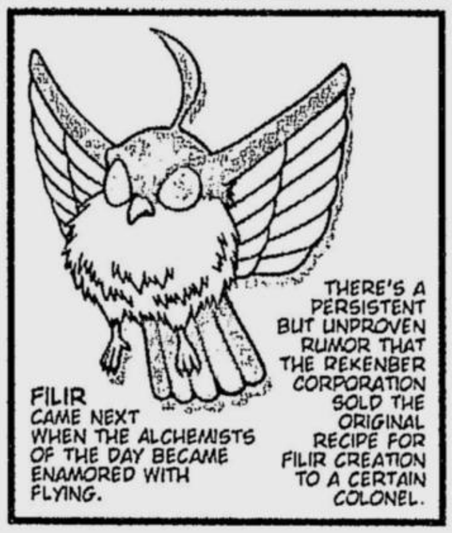
e-mail feedback: arts@inquirer.com.ph

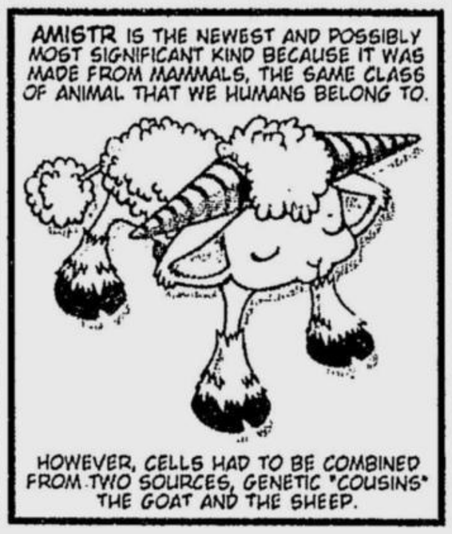
RAGNAROK

BY LEVEL-UP GAMES

THE PRO HYPERMART IS NOW OPEN! BUY IN-GAME ITEMS USING TOP-UP CREDITS! FOR MORE DETAILS, PLEASE VISIT HTTP://WWW.RAGNAROK.PH SARAP TALAGA DITO SA MMO NG BAYAN!







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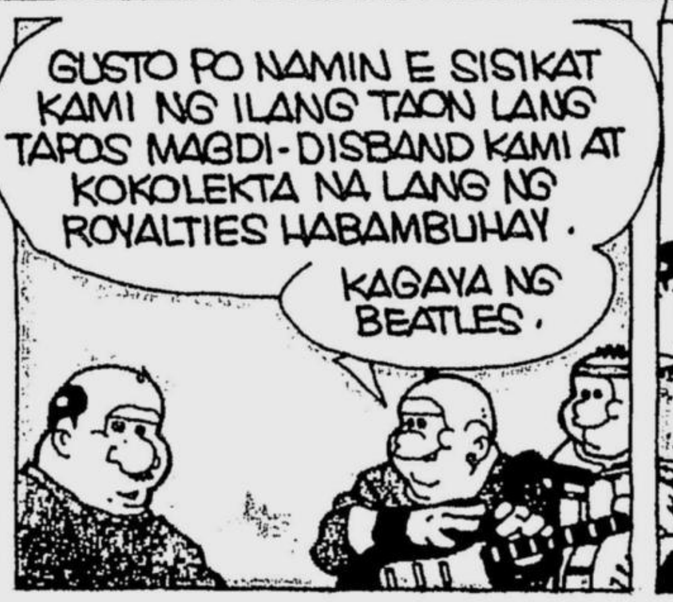
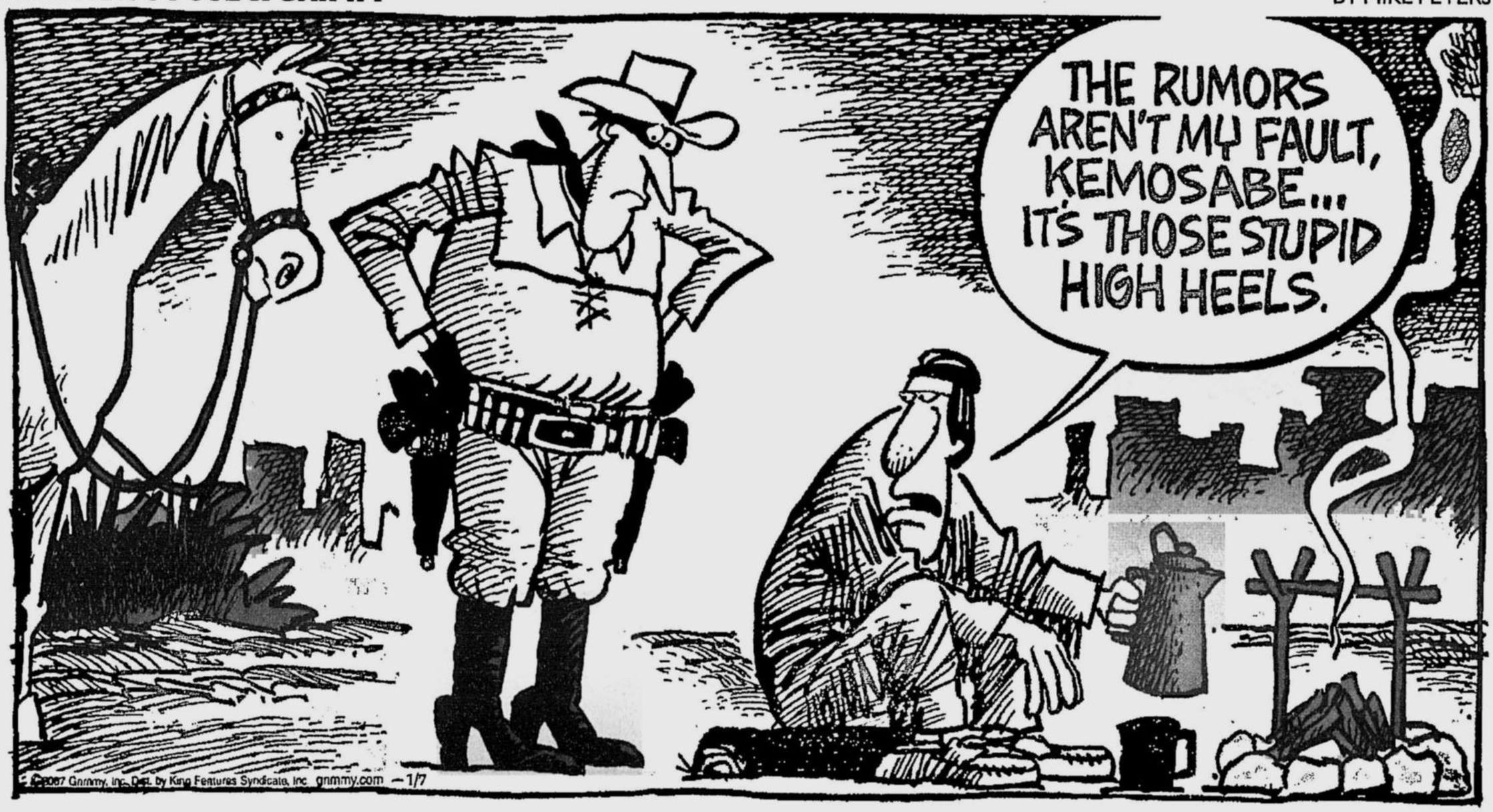
PUGAD BABOY

BY POL MEDINA JR.



MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS



ZITS

BY JERRY SCOTT AND JIM BORGMAN

INDAY WANDA

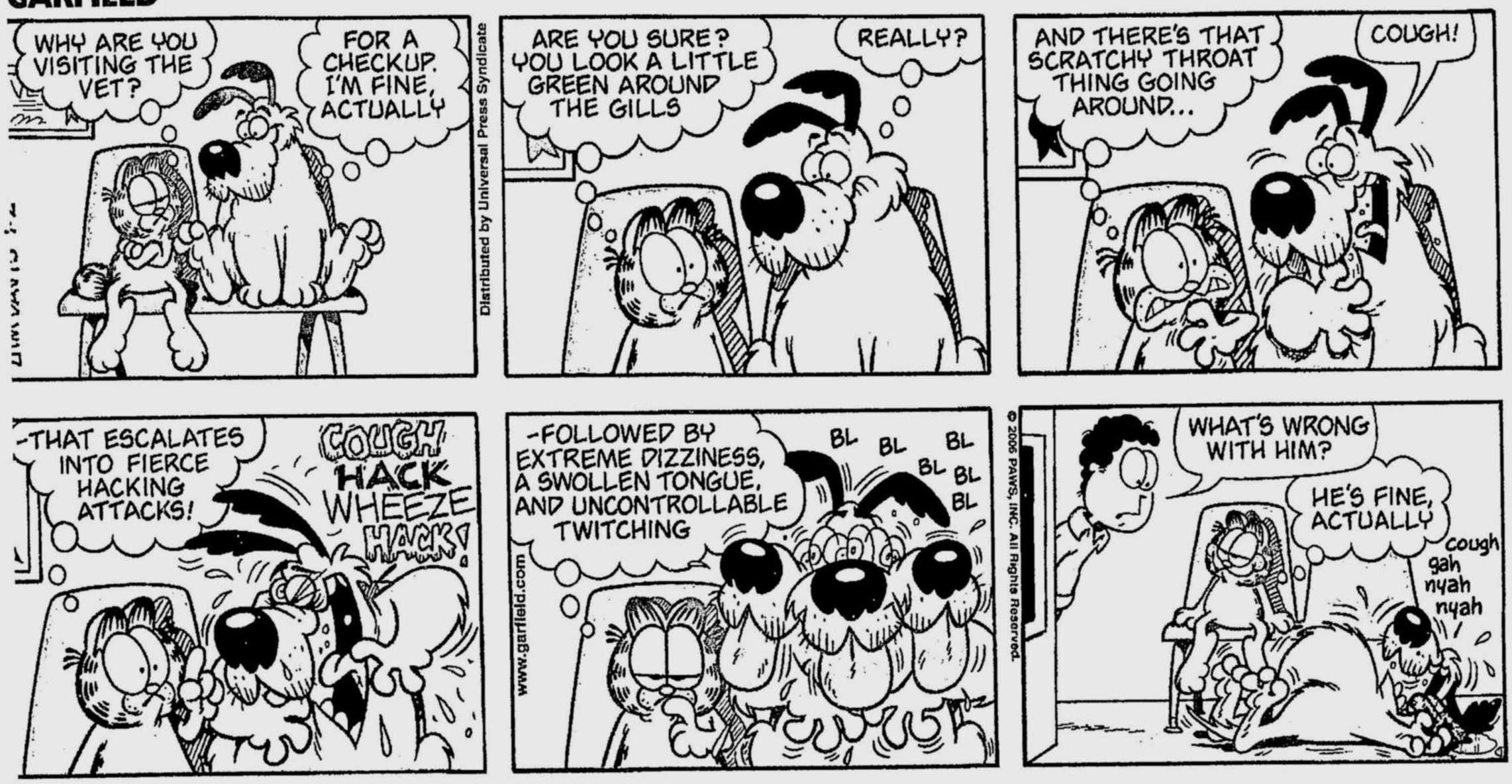
BY BLOG CALIGUIA

LEAVES OF GLAZ

BY MANGO COMICS

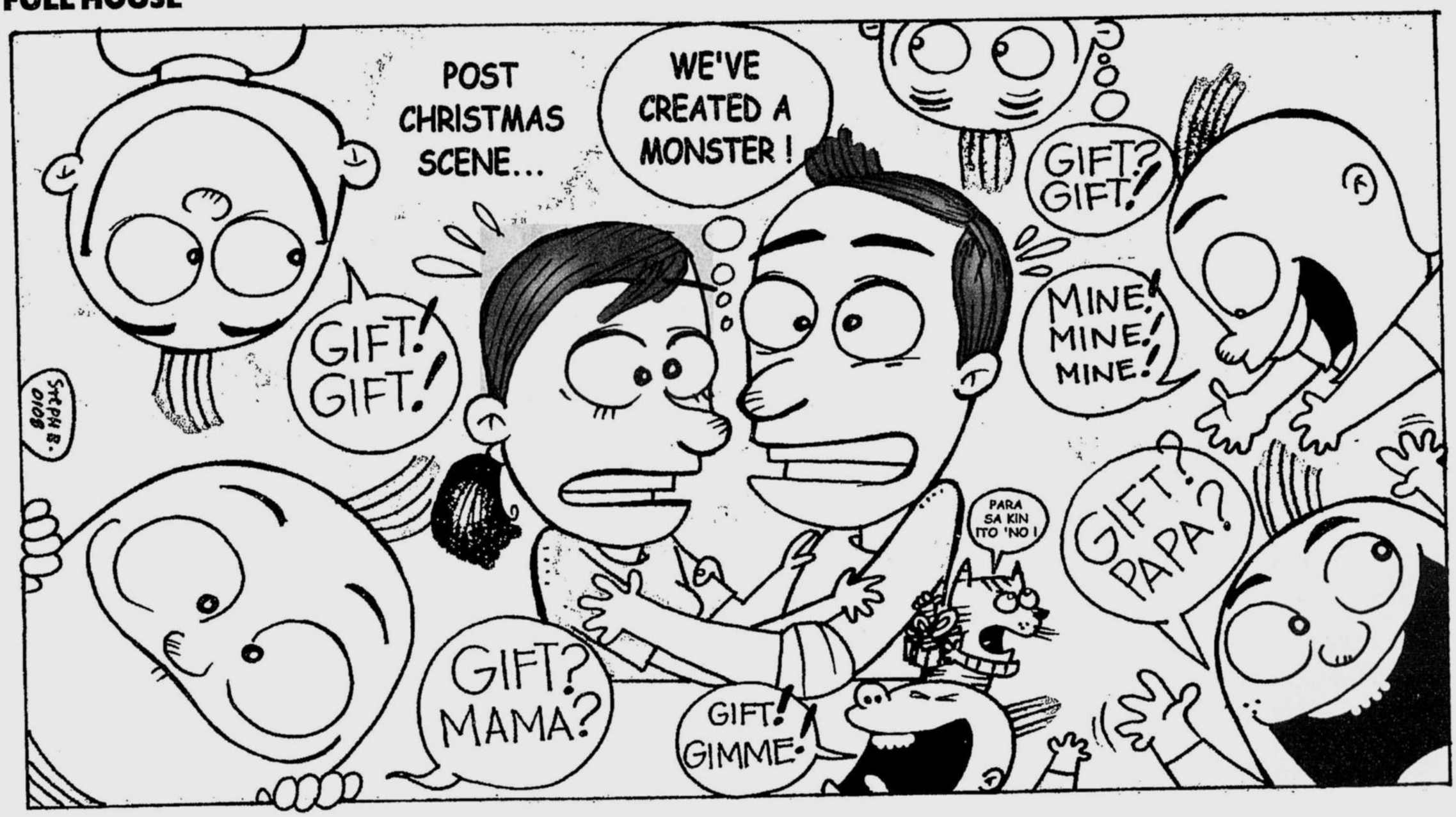
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS



FULL HOUSE

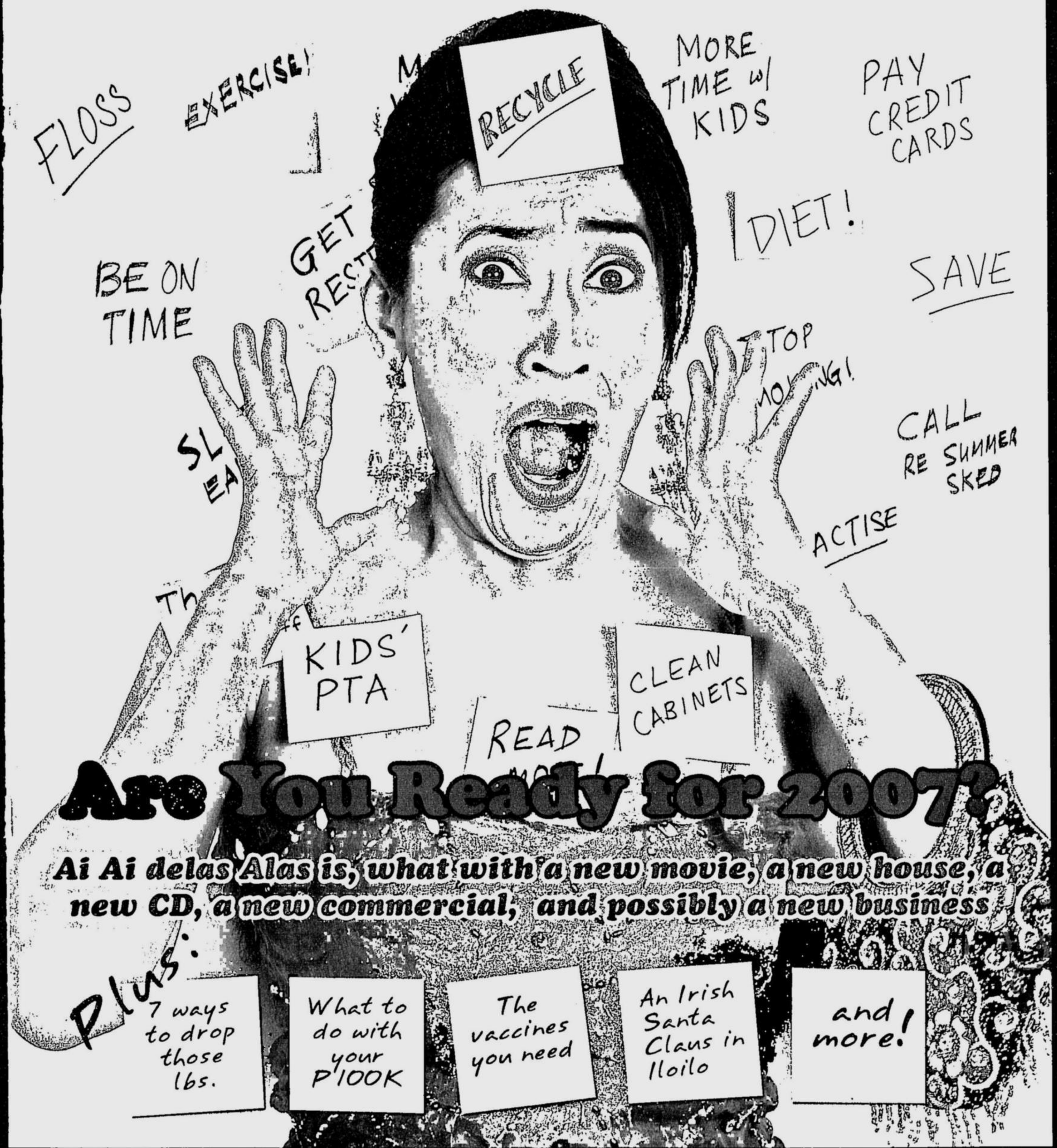
BY STEPH BRAVO



*sunday*INQUIRER*magazine*

January 7, 2007

FREE



Are You Ready for 2007?

Ai Ai delas Alas is, what with a new movie, a new house, a new CD, a new commercial, and possibly a new business

Plus:

- 7 ways to drop those lbs.
- What to do with your P100K
- The vaccines you need
- An Irish Santa Claus in Iloilo
- and more!

Text by Tara Yap

Playing Santa and Other Causes

There's no end to what this Irishman will do to help Filipino kids

Tara Yap

Just call him "volunteer": Murray with the schoolchildren of Oton

IRISHMAN Patrick Murray does not look like Santa Claus. He has no big belly, no white beard and doesn't even wear the white-trimmed red suit. But for a group of underprivileged children in Oton on the outskirts of Iloilo City, Murray has been a real Santa for the past 15 years. Since 1987, the guy has been delivering from London candies, toys, vitamins, clothes, and even books to the town's children, who welcome him with open arms.

Murray, 62, a former postal worker who has made the Philippines his retirement home since 2002, blushes when he's compared to Jolly St. Nick. He'd rather be called a volunteer, which has been his lifelong advocacy. "My work had been tough, blood, sweat, and tears," he recalls. His annual pilgrimage begins as early as September when he collects the gifts, packs them, and sends them from England. By Christmas, he flies in to distribute the gifts himself.

A native of Cork, Ireland, Murray found at a very young age the inspiration "to help the needy, the deprived, and the underprivileged" from then Lord Mayor Pat Kerrigan, whose "mayoralty was devoted to those ends." At 17, Murray pioneered the bed-push as a fundraising activity, pushing a bed through the streets so people could donate money, clothes, medicines, or food. At first, it was only for the sick, whom he encountered at a local hospital. When he moved to London, his voluntary work intensified. He did his most ambitious work in 1982, when he bed-pushed for more than 500 miles and raised funds for bone marrow research.

Aside from the usual bed-push, Murray also fasts. The famous Tower of London and the London Bridge have played hosts to his 48 hours of self-imposed abstinence for a cause. On another occasion, he spent roughly 75 hours at the Hammersmith Bridge in freezing and rainy weather with only water and biscuits for sustenance. He succeeded in getting donations for the surgery of Ellen Ramirez, a 4-year-old baby in the Philippines suffering from a congenital brain abnormality.

But it was on his first visit to the Philippines in 1987 with his wife Tarcie, a nurse he met in London, that he was shocked to see "pure poverty." There and then, he decided to help the children of Oton.

His benevolence has not gone unnoticed. In October 2002, Daily Mail, one of England's most widely read newspapers, declared him one of the country's Unsung Heroes. He was honored for having "taken food, medicine and books to children in deprived areas of the Philippines." He personally received the award from Prince Charles.

What makes Murray special is his ability to single-handedly do his voluntary work without the backing of the government or any philanthropic organizations. "Let's not have the talk, let's have action and deeds. I'm interested in the doers and not the talkers," he points out.

In his lifelong mission, Murray has shown that voluntary work is not only for the holiday season. His selfless sacrifices in helping others have made him live the Christmas spirit all year round. "We all have to look after our fellow human beings, especially those less fortunate than ourselves." •

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by Margaux Salcedo

A Foodie Forecast

Beef, microwaved wonders and upscale, global Pinoy fare are just some of the trends experts see in the year ahead

WONDERING what 2007 will bring in terms of restaurants and food? I certainly am. Not one to count on my own predictions, I have gathered forecasts from a few of today's leading food authorities and chefs. Here's the lowdown:

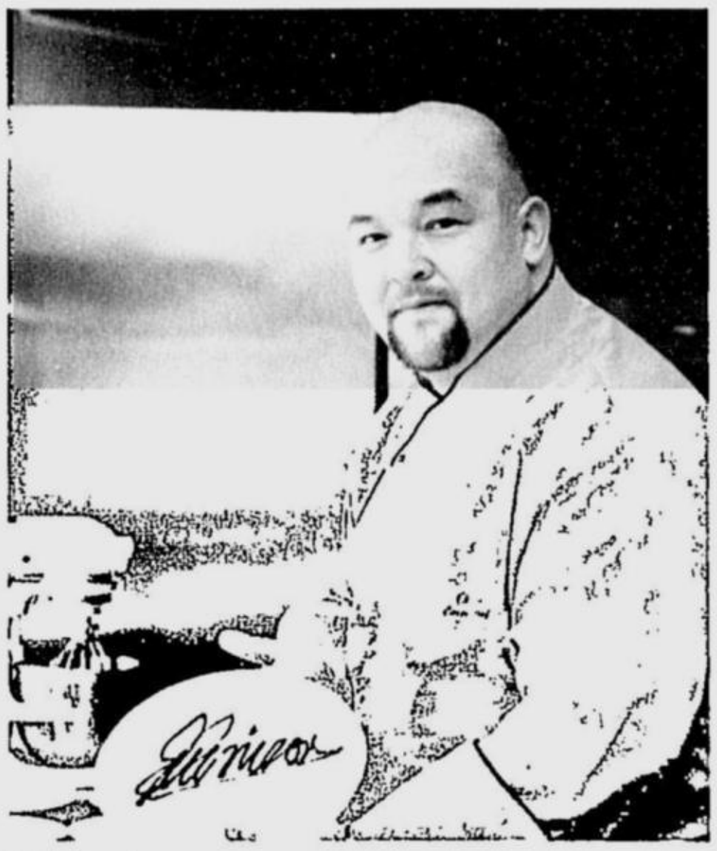
REGGIE ASPIRAS, Chef/Culinary Professor/Columnist, Kitchen Rescue, PDI: My forecast, considering that I am a chef and not Madame Auring, is more of comfort food. New renditions of the old. A lot of nicely plated artsy food. It will make use of a lot of fusion ingredients from the east and west. Spumas, I think, will find their way into the country, as is the trend in Europe. I look forward to many possibilities on the new ways of executing the classics. I think, more than ever, we will see the genius of our local chefs. The ingredient costs these days are fantastic. In such instances, creativity is called for. So I reckon it will be the year of non-loin cuts such as beef cheeks, short plate, ox tongue, etc.

J GAMBOA, Chef, Tsukiji: I think beef will make a comeback in '07. Not so much the US beef carvings in hotel buffets, but prime and wagyu beef will show up in menus. Also, more cuts will be available, like wagyu beef cheeks, tongue, hanging tender, shoulder clod tender.

ED QUIMSON, Chef, Teak: God really blessed me this year with a lot of travel, and this is what I noticed all over the world: that you can buzz (microwave/cook) mostly any kind of cooked food over the counter. Think freshly cooked food presented for individual orders packaged beautifully to entice your appetite. A perfect example are the food choices found at the Salcedo Saturday Market. The array of ready-to-eat food is amazing. Maybe a new type of deli will emerge where you can find an array of delicacies from bottled *binagoongan na santol* (santol in fermented shrimp paste) to duck liver paté. That would be a dream destination deli. There will be more people buying ready-to-eat food rather than cooking at home.

J Gamboa

Reggie Aspiras



Ed Quimson

PAUL POBLADOR, Chef, Kusina Salud: Next year's trends: quality, locally grown organic or even non-organic produce, which means fresher, better-tasting ingredients which are not too expensive, that will in turn give reasonable prices for high quality dishes.

NANA OZAETA, Editor in Chief, F&B World: There will be gourmet deli items by top chefs: Watch out for some local chefs coming out with a gourmet deli line of food items. Personally, I think this would be great, especially if they could come out with Pinoy deli items, but more upscale! Another trend in the US is for top-ranked chefs like Tom Collichio, Thomas Keller, etc. to open more casual, affordable restaurants. I call it gourmet *pang-masa*. There will also be more interest in ethnic and exotic cuisines like Middle Eastern, Greek, Moroccan, Indian, etc. For desserts, restaurants will be using more Asian flavors/fruits like *pandan, calamansi, ube*, etc. Healthwise, banning trans-fats is now a big issue in the US and this may soon become a bigger issue here (or at least I hope so), especially for food manufacturers and fast food chains.

For my two cents, since I don't consider myself an authority (yet), here is a wish list in lieu of predictions:

I'd like to see better educated servers. I want to see waiters who don't just take orders but who actually know their food, who can educate the customer. I remember being very impressed by a waitress at Pastis in the Meat Packing District in New York City, who gave me a

(continued on page

by Amanda R. Carpo

The P100,000 Question

Got a hundred grand to spare? Do you just want to put it in a safe place, or see it grow? Here's advice from an expert

HOLIDAY festivities provide a convenient excuse to indulge, and it is typical for most of us to do about 80 percent of our spending in the last quarter of the year. It's blissfully easy to get caught up in the season, overspend, and find ourselves in the red after the New Year. After the feast comes famine and like the guilt that follows a calorific meal, we are filled with new resolve to spend our money wisely—or make more of it. The new year is certainly a good time to think of personal finances, except that most of us are clueless when it comes to investing our hard-earned cash.

Fortunately, there's entrepreneur, management consultant, financial investor, and author of "Wealth Within Your Reach," Francisco Colayco, to guide us.

So, we ask him as befits a first-time investor: What would you do with P100,000 to maximize returns?

It depends on the individual, says Colayco. "We are all looking for a good return on investment, but we all have different expectations. Ask yourself how averse you are to risks. When will you need the return on your investment? What is your need for liquidity? Is P100,000 all you really have?"

Whether the amount is P100,000 or P100 million, managing your personal finances is a matter of careful and committed planning, says Colayco. In his book, he writes: "If your problem is your inability to manage your earnings, no amount of money will solve your problem.

The key to financial success lies in knowing:

- What your financial needs are
- How to plan to meet those needs, and
- How to manage your earnings and investments

Needs vs Wants

Many Filipinos live from paycheck to paycheck, with their salaries wholly devoted to caring for their extended families, or are otherwise trapped in unhealthy spending patterns.

Colayco: Saving means breaking patterns

Midnight Madness buying spree on payday? Eating out seven days a week? Racking up credit card debts? Some people live beyond their means.

If your goal is financial independence or being wealthy, this behavior pattern must be broken. In his book, Colayco defines wealth as having the financial resources to support your chosen lifestyle.

If P100,000 is all you have to save, invest, or spend, it might be time to budget.

Resist impulse-buying gadgets, cars, luxuries, and "stuff that decline in value," advises Colayco. Before you buy anything, ask yourself if you really need it or whether you can afford it.

Plan

Can a P100,000 investment go very far? Well, it's a start. According to Colayco, it may not be all that you have. Examine your existing assets and liquidate those that you don't really need. Check out the skills you have that you can put to good use, or the business you are already in.

You can also think of leveraging the amount by borrowing from a bank or pooling your investments with others. Or go institutional. Rather than spend your time weaving together a full-blown investment portfolio, let a mutual fund company do the work for you.

Manage

Dream big, or at least big enough to spread your risks in different investments. In his book, Colayco writes that the goal of investing is not only a high return, but that the investment must always match a specific purpose.

To a certain extent, you have to ask yourself if you are prepared to lose everything, or in lieu of that, what you are prepared to lose.

In addition, you have to know how long your money will be tied up or how long you can afford to have your money tied up.

(continued on page 12)

Roje

Ride, Sally, ride

An Australian manager based in Manila refused to take unexplainable weight gain sitting down. With proper medication, diet and exercise, she's got a new body and, quite possibly, career

Transformation: Clark at 200-plus pounds in 2000, above: trim and healthy, at right

ON Christmas 2000, Sally Clark went mountain climbing with members of her family in their native Australia. What was supposed to be a happy occasion for Clark, manager of Kingsford Environmental Company Philippines since moving to the country in August 1997, was actually the lowest point of her life. Clark, who was gaining weight so fast that she stopped checking after tipping the scale at 210 lbs., was cramping from the climb. Unable to continue, she stopped and turned back as her family proceeded on the hike.

"At my worst, I used to think that if this is all there is to life, then I don't want to live," says Clark, who was also extremely fatigued, depressed and missing her monthly period. "But I had had enough."

Overeating, she believed, was not the cause of her dramatic weight gain; neither was lack of exercise, as she regularly played tennis and worked out at the gym. So when tests revealed that there was nothing wrong with her, Clark trusted her body, researched on the Net, and underwent another exam. This time, the doctor, an endocrinologist, discovered that Clark had two conditions: a thyroid problem and Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome. While the former affects the rate of one's metabolism, the latter, the most common hormonal reproductive problem of women of child-bearing age, has been linked to insulin resistance. Dramatic weight gain is a result of both conditions, but even treatment makes it difficult to shed off excess pounds.

"To find out that there was a real reason behind my weight gain was very liberating," says Clark, who now takes medication for her thyroid problem. "But I also knew that I would have to work extra hard to lose weight."

And that she did, even though she hardly considered herself the athletic type. Injured from tennis, Clark threw herself into gym work—specifically Indoor Cycling, from which she lost 30 lbs. after a year of near-daily classes. The activity, where a trainer leads students on stationary bikes on a simulated road ride, proved particularly motivating to Clark, who thrived on its high energy and group environment. "You can also go at your own pace," she says, "and you don't have to be graceful or coordinated—you just have to be able to pedal."

She also tried adventure racing (the AXN Challenge in 2003), a sport that led her to meet friends in underwater hockey, which in turn, brought her to the community of triathlon. Clark trained well enough to participate in and finish two White Rock Half-Ironman long-distance races; she's also in the middle of training for a full Ironman long-distance race. But what really makes her smile about this whole experience is that she is now a member of Extribe, a group that organizes triathlons and multi-sport events (www.extribe.com.ph). As for Indoor Cycling, the once overweight student has since moved to the front and center of the class. A certified trainer since June 2006, she leads classes two to three times a week at the Loyola Spinning School in Discovery Suites (call 0917 858-SPIN).

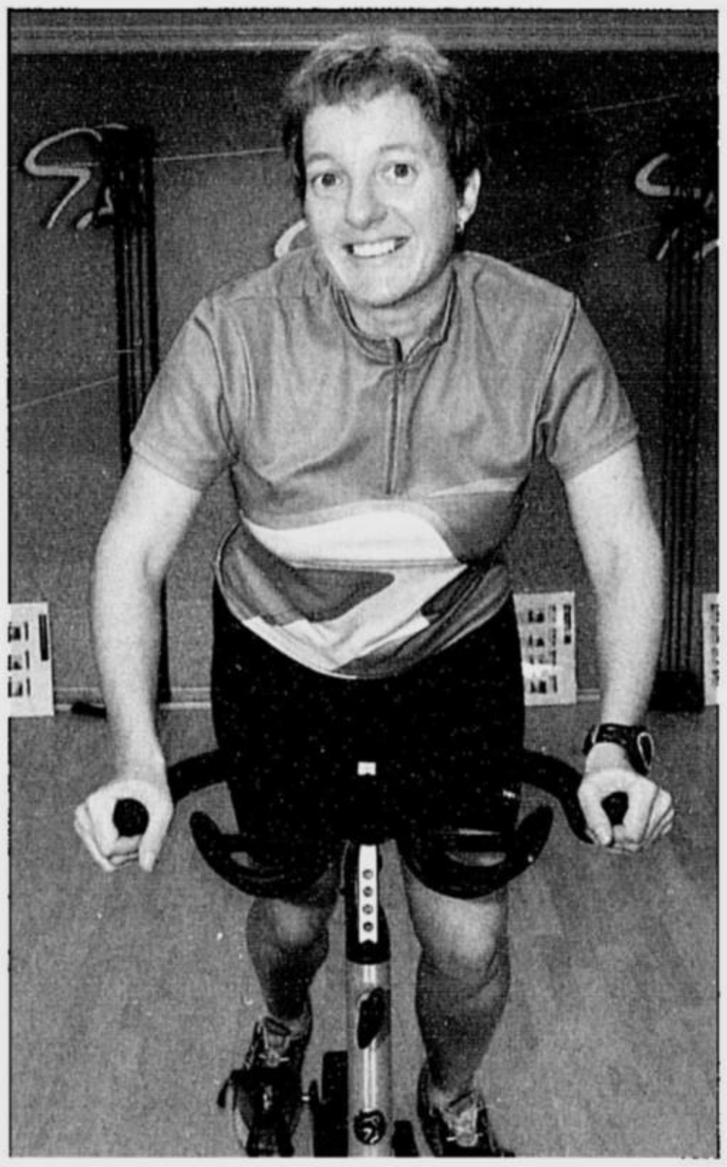
Naturally, all this activity (she runs and swims three times a week, and goes out of town to bike) has produced a much-desired trimmer shape. At 150 lbs., the five-foot-five-inch Clark has received numerous compliments,

including "sexy," a comment that still requires some getting used to. "In Australia, you don't say 'Hey, you're looking sexy,' you say, 'Hey, you're looking good,' because if you call someone sexy, it's suggestive," says Clark with a giggle. "So the first time somebody called me sexy here, I was, like, 'What? Is that appropriate?' But I think it's more important to be fit than thin."

The weight loss has done wonders as well for her once flagging spirit. Clark, 36, declares she is "getting better with age! Change is possible," she says. "It's not easy. It's even scary because when you're fat, you can be invisible. But when you lose weight, you become a different person. So my diet has changed, I'm exercising more. Yeah, I'm feeling good about myself."

Good enough, in fact, to toy with the idea of a major career shift. Sally Clark, life coach? "I don't know if I'm allowed to do that here, as there are some limitations as to what expats can do," says Clark. "But my dad died recently (of cancer, in August 2006) and one of the things he always said was, 'Think of yourself as a stone that creates ripples when thrown in a pond. Those ripples are the people you touch. One ripple won't do much, but many ripples can erode earth, make big changes.' So if I can affect one person, that person can go on to affect other people, and they can affect many others."

For now, simply being a foreigner helps. "As an expat, I'm used to standing out," chuckles Clark, who is greeted with "Hey, Joe!" by bystanders whenever she whizzes by on her bike during out-of-town rides with friends.



Spin doctor: When you lose weight, you become a different person.

"With that comes a responsibility. So whether I like standing out or not, I might as well use it for something beneficial. Here, I feel I can achieve something worthwhile, I can make a difference."

In a way, a brand new life in another country only seems appropriate for Clark, who has a twin sister and is the eldest of five girls and a boy. Born in Perth and raised in North Queensland, this self-described farm girl is a product of an intellectual family. Her father, for one, was a science teacher, who coached students for the Chemistry Olympiad.

At the University of Queensland where she majored in occupational therapy, Clark made friends with a British-Chinese gentleman who was pursuing his Ph.D. The two kept in touch even as she flew to China to study Mandarin for a year, and he returned to his home in Hong Kong to put up an environmental business. Once everything was in order, he tracked Clark down and invited her to join the company. "I don't know anything about the environmental industry," she reasoned. "It doesn't matter," he said. "You'll learn."

Clark moved to Hong Kong and, as her friend predicted, learned everything about running an environmental company on the job. Two years later, when the business chose to expand in the Philippines, off went Clark to set it up. That was nine years ago.

To run an environmental company in a country notorious for its air pollution and poor waste management practices, Clark approaches her job the way she did her weight loss: with infinite patience, education and no short cuts. "We build waste water treatment plants," she says. "If you buy a plant that's cheaper but not properly designed or sized, then it won't work. But if you pay a little more for something that's the right size and design, the chances are greater that it'll work."

Yes, Clark is aware of the corruption and the poverty around her. But she also sees a lot of hope, potential and opportunity in the country that she has since called "my home." Family here is a supportive *"bah-kah-dah"* of Pinoy

Want to lose weight too?

Sally Clark offers some tips

WEIGHT loss is most successful when it happens slowly as a result of eating a nutritious diet and exercising regularly.

1. Get plenty of different brightly colored vegetables and fruits each day. Fruits and vegetables are filling and have heaps of vitamins and minerals (as long as you skip the mayonnaise or cream). Experiment with salads, vegetable dishes and soups.

2. Find a physical activity or sport that you enjoy doing, which is convenient, fits your budget, and that you can do regularly. Recruit your friends and family and encourage each other to stay active and healthy.

3. Slow and steady wins the race. Rome wasn't built in a day, and neither is weight loss best done rapidly. Avoid fad diets. If weight loss is fast, it won't be sustainable and may be quickly regained. Avoid skipping meals as this lets your body know it is in starvation mode and will make it harder to lose weight.

4. Practice portion control, not denial. Restricting foods will often lead to feelings of deprivation and may result in binging. Instead, stay with smaller portions of rich foods and savor each

continued on p. 28

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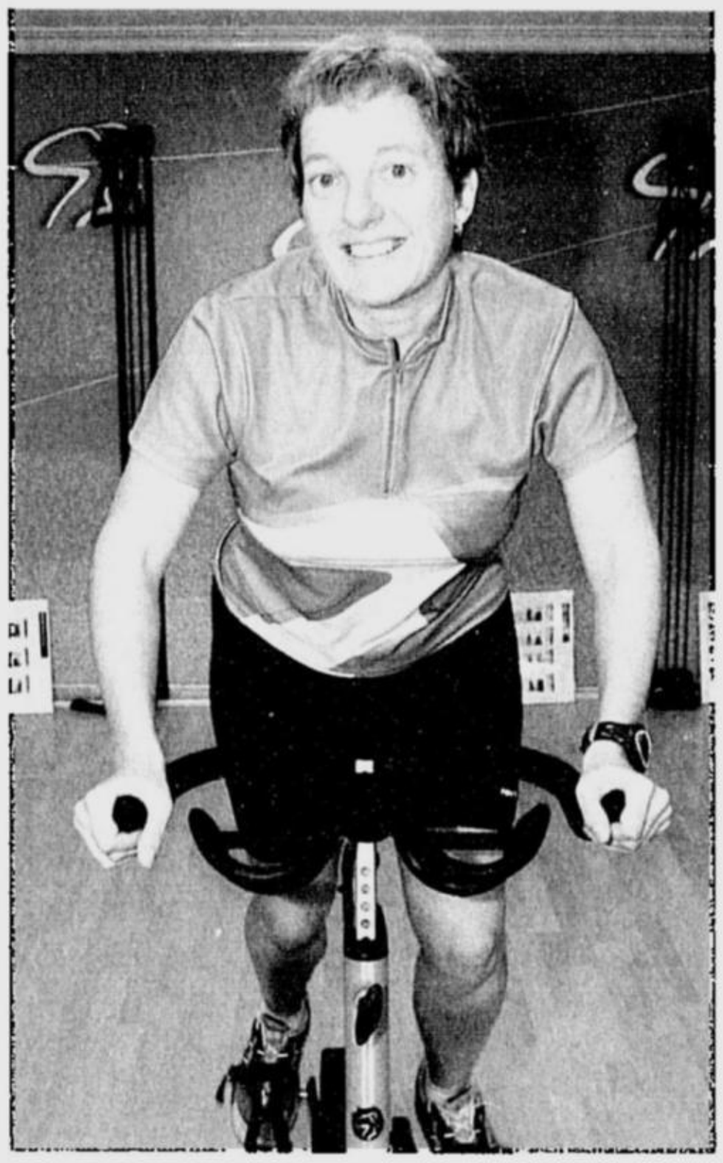

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Cover Story

by Pennie Azarcon-dela Cruz
Photographs by Chito Vecina

Are You Ready for 2007?

Ai Ai delas Alas is, what with a new movie, a new house, a new CD, a new commercial, five fairly new cars and possibly a new business in store for the country's top female comic

THE apologies are heartfelt, the voice at the other end a trifle nasal. She'd be late for the interview, Ai Ai delas Alas says; she'd been feverish and had overslept. Later, she confides to her *Ate* Joan how she had forgotten her mobile phone in the bathroom the night before and did not hear the alarm go off the next morning.

Her elder sister, who doubles as the comic star's personal assistant, explains further: The week before Christmas has always been hectic. Ai Ai had gone to *simbang gabi* (dawn mass) after a late night show at Klownz, the comedy club she owns, and the lack of sleep had taken its toll. She's also been making the rounds of office parties where she's always been a clear favorite.

Not that she's complaining, says the country's no. 1 female comic. It's been a good year, with this year's prospects lighting up like a burst of fireworks. She has a new movie titled "Cute *Ang Ina Mo,"* a follow-up of her phenomenally successful 2005 movie *"Tanging Ina;"* a new CD from the movie, a new house that she's just had blessed last November ("Who'd ever think I'd own a house in Ayala Greenside? *Di naman ako si* Sharon Cuneta!"), and five relatively new cars—a Jaguar, two Chevrolets, a Suburban and a Honda Civic for her kids. On top of tons of endorsement is the renewal of her advertising contract with Maggi Magic Sarap, which coincides happily with her latest venture: cooking classes at the Center for Culinary Arts that she might one day parlay into a Filipino fastfood business. "I'll start small, *pero kung gusto ng Diyos, baka lumaki* (if God wills it, it could expand)."

Then there are her shows abroad. "I have to take them to save up. My

savings dried up when I had my house built," Ai Ai says in Filipino. She had initially put up her first house for sale at P13.5 million, but later decided to give it to her aunt, who had sent her and her five siblings to school.

"Farmer *lang kasi ang* father *ko,"* she says sheepishly. Her aunt, she adds, had coaxed her to say that her father was a merchant, should anybody ask. The aunt had also legally adopted her, but she only learned this much later from her *"chismosang* (gossipy) classmates."

There had been an agreement, Ai Ai recalls. "If the fifth baby turned out to be a girl, my maiden aunt said, *akin na lang* (give her to me). *Para akong tuta na pinamigay"* (I was like a puppy being given away), she laughs. That rankled, and for the longest time, she harbored a grudge against her parents. "I didn't know how to call my real mother because I already had an *inay* in my aunt. I was also angry at my father because he gave me away without giving my mother a choice. But of course, if he didn't do that, I wouldn't be here in Manila, and my fate would have been different."

Ai Ai has made peace with her parents since then, and provides for their needs. She now calls her real mother Inay, while her aunt answers to Mom.

This Mass Communications graduate from Far Eastern University has always believed in destiny. "It's fated," she says of the secret of her success. *"Sa dami-dami ng artista, bakit ako pa? Di ba,* many are called but few are chosen? *Bigay ito ng Diyos, kaya dapat pag-ingatan ko.* (Fame is God's gift so I have to nurture it)."

Indeed, a series of fortuitous events led Martina Eileen delas Alas to where she is now. "My aunt was very strict, so *nagrebelde ako sa* college. *Naglayas ako* (I ran away). I stayed with my sister and one time, she and a friend brought me to Music Box, a sing-along club." She had gotten drunk and had grabbed the mike, singing off-key and not caring.

"I sang 'Point of No Return' by Madonna and the audience was cheering. *Di ba, tuwang-tuwa ka pag di marunong kumanta yung* singer? But feel *ko, ang galing-galing ko."*

"Management took notice and offered me the job as sing-along master." At that time, she was also working as a secretary at Bulwagang Gantimpala, a theater group. "I was office secretary by day, sing-along host by night. *Ayun, na*-TB ako (I got tuberculosis). But I took Odinah tablets for six months and got well."

Does he come with the car? Ai Ai says she consults her kids about her lovelife

Movie scribes saw the perky performer at Music Box and spread the word. Ai Ai soon brought her singing comic act to different clubs, until TV host Pepe Pimentel watched her, and guested her on his game show, *"Kwarta o Kahon."*

"But my biggest break was when I guested on 'Late Night with Edu.' Channel 2 saw me and offered me a show and movies." Before the record-breaking *"Tanging Ina,"* Ai Ai made a total of 32 movies and had five TV shows in the 13 years since that fateful drunken singing incident.

Along the way, she fell in love. "He was also from the theater circle, and we had split up. We met again at a mutual friend's birthday and had a one-night stand. I swear, *minsan lang yun at* first time *pa,* but we have a son, Sancho Vito, now almost 16. But the man has a family and didn't want to tell them about the boy. Sancho was 9 when he finally met his father."

She met Miguel Vera at Hatid-Saya, the government-sponsored cultural extravaganza that had Filipino entertainers traveling abroad to salve the overseas Pinoys' homesickness. "He was a singer, and we went to Europe together. He's also married, but I had two kids with him: Shaun Nicolo, 13,and Sophia Andrea, now almost 11." The relationship was stormy, with episodes of battering as recounted in a TV dramatization of Ai Ai's life.

But her greatest challenges, says this comic, came when she faced life as a single mother. "I wanted to be there when my children needed me, but I also had to work," she recalls. It took years before she was able to prioritize them, she adds. "Now I go to their graduation and PTA, give them lavish birthday parties. They're my greatest blessings."

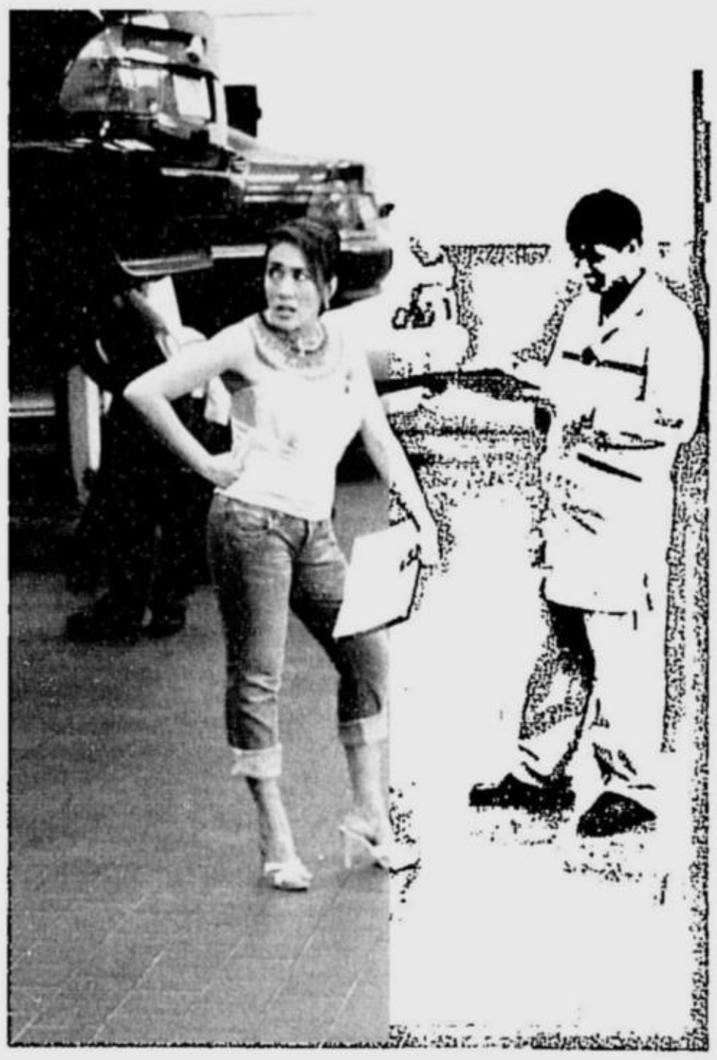
They even have a say on her love life: "They tell me they approve of my latest love, because they're not afraid that I would get hurt."

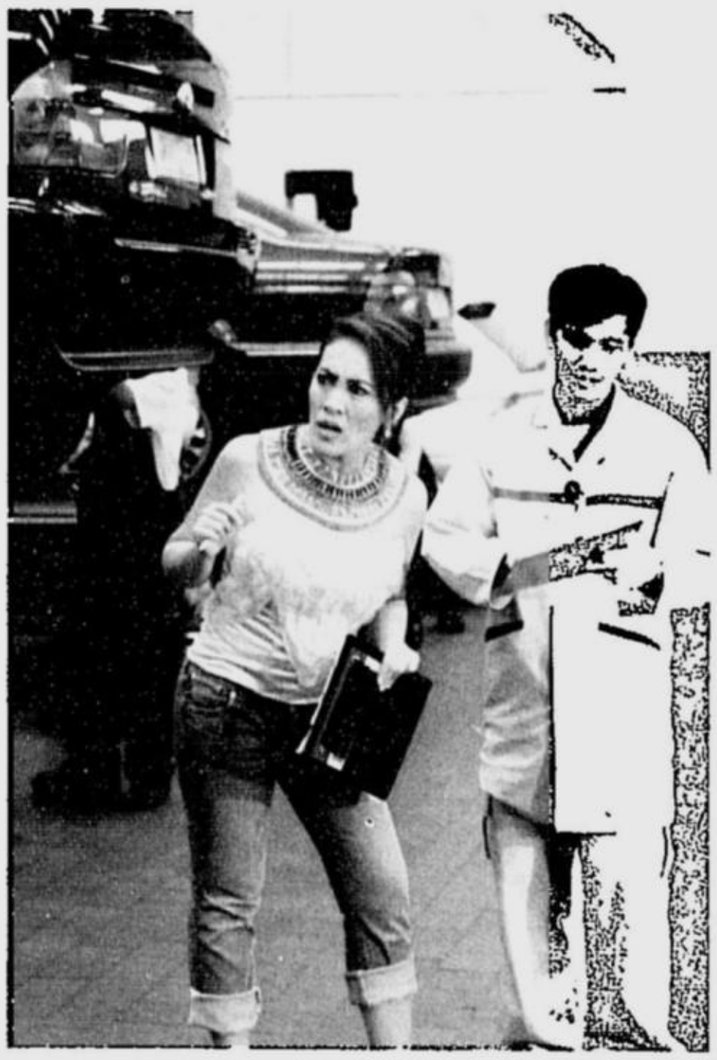
She is such a sucker for love, Ai Ai admits, falling in love so often the news has become regular tabloid fodder. There was that American businessman she met during a show abroad, and a 22-year-old badminton instructor she was supposed to marry despite the almost 20-year difference in their age. "I guess it has something to do with my lonely childhood and difficult relationships. I really want to have a real family."

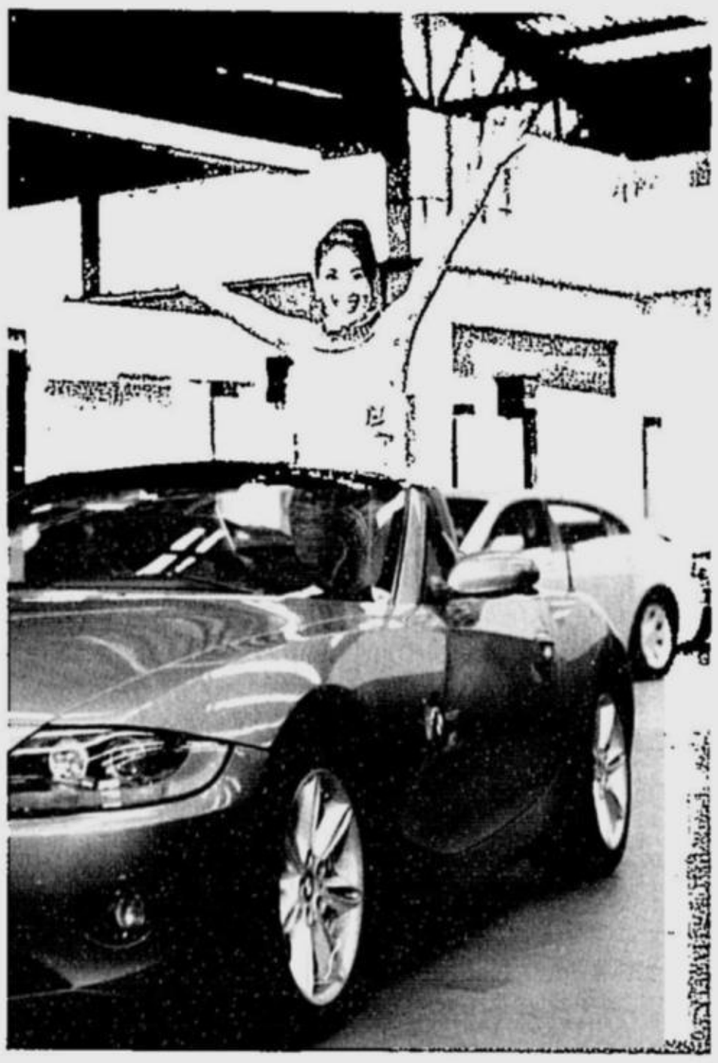
Her children are more level-headed, she adds. "They say, *kahit tayo-tayo lang, masaya na kami* (it doesn't matter if we're not a complete family) as long as you don't get hurt. I thank God my children grew up well, *mababait sila.* And you know, as a single mom, it's so tempting to indulge them. You want to compensate for all your absence, the times you're not there for them, *ganun.* But I don't want to spoil them."

Apparently, there's little danger of that. When a son called to ask permission to stay overnight at a party, laid-back Ai Ai suddenly transforms into an OC mom: stern, scolding and threatening doomsday to the errant caller. You don't want to cross this woman.

(continued on page 10)







Ganoon? **After a bumpy start, this single mom's life is finally running smoothly**

Are You Ready for 2007? (from page 1

Her career has not been as even-keeled. Two years ago, she hit her lowest point, Ai Ai confesses. "For six months, I didn't have work. At the same time, I was building my house. *Ay naku, dasal ako nang dasal.* I trusted God and somehow, I pulled through. I guess God was just teaching me a lesson *na dapat,* save for a rainy day *talaga."*

The highest point in her career? When her first main starrer, *"Tanging Ina,"* broke local box office records by grossing at least P100 million so far. "And I made history," adds Ai Ai. "For the first time, the lead star is a funny woman instead of the usual pretty girl."

And that, she cites, is her biggest contribution to the movie industry: "I opened doors for comediennes, and showed how important they are, *na pwede silang maging bida* (that they can be lead stars). In other words, *pinataas ko ang kita namin* (I raised our pay scale)!" she says, laughing uproariously.

And that, say local wags and feng shui experts, is definitely the best way to start the year right. •

A Foodie Forecast (page 4

very good description of sole, which sea it comes from, how it compares to other fishes. Chefs should educate their servers, and not just the kitchen staff, on matters of taste. After all, the servers are pretty much the frontliners and have the responsibility of selling the food items on the menu.

I'd like to see sommeliers at fine dining restaurants. I was most impressed in Singapore to find a sommelier at a Chinese restaurant. This was at the Majestic Hotel and he was pairing Chinese dishes with French, Californian, Australian wine. His knowledge of wines was very impressive and we happily discussed each bottle as our plates were changed.

I'd like to see more environment-friendly practices. In the United States, the Green Restaurant Association certifies restaurants that are environment-friendly. This guarantees that a restaurant works to save water, recycles, and employs other good practices. We should follow this example, especially because the weather is already showing how hurt and angry Mother Nature has become over our carelessness with the environment.

I would like to see celebrity farmers. I would very much be interested in watching a show with Jill Sandique explaining how to grow papaya in your backyard.

I would like to see a wider selection of beer. Someone should really follow the footsteps of Beer Paradise and increase our beer selection. I would really like to see some Yebisu in this country. And more Guiness.

Lastly, I want to see an international recognition of chefs from the Pearl of the Orient Seas. If people fly to Australia for Tetsuya's or to Shanghai for Jean Georges, why not fly to Manila for, um, Segismundo? Dorotan's? Bebot? Well, whatever the name or whoever that amazing chef might be, 2007 should really see a shout out of *adobo* pride. Anyway, I have confidence in our chefs. If Martha Stewart herself was impressed by Romy Dorotan (of Cendrillon in Soho), whom she invited to demo on her show, this wish shouldn't be too far-fetched! •

By Ruel S. De Vera
Photographs by Rudy Esperas

V for Vaccination

These young doctors have teamed up to educate and inoculate Filipinos through the Immunizers Clinic

V formation: (L to R) Dan Lipayon, Julie Chua Lipayon, Anne Lagman and Denton Chua

SOME of us remember the sugar cubes, while others know the syringe only too well. But everyone has some experience—often unforgettable—of vaccination as children. Aside from the mark it leaves, getting vaccinated is one memory that most Filipinos bring into adulthood.

But soon, that pinprick of a memory will take on flesh, if the four doctors behind the Immunizers Clinic have their way. Dr. Julie Ann Chua Lipayon, 31, Dr. Daniel Lipayon, 35, Dr. Jan Denton Chua, 29, and Dr. Anne Marie Lagman, 27, are spreading the gospel of adult vaccination. It really isn't just for kids, anymore.

"Adults are equally exposed to certain diseases which are vaccine-preventable," Anne explains. "Adults, being main income-earners, have a direct economic impact if they become incapacitated due to sickness. They also have the primary responsibility of taking care of their young children or their elderly parents. They should protect the ones they love by protecting themselves as well."

The germ of an idea behind Immunizers Clinic began when Julie, Daniel and Denton encountered many queries about Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) some years back. "There is still no direct vaccine against SARS," Dan says, " but the question always came up if one was available. From this we realized that though vaccines are not effective against the SARS outbreak, many other communicable diseases are preventable through immunization."

The connections here run deep. Julie and Denton are siblings, the eldest and second, respectively, of three children born to a cardiologist and his business executive wife. Julie, an active student leader at the Ateneo, graduated with a degree in BS Psychology and followed it up with an M.D. at the University of the East Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Medical Center. Dan, a nephew of actress Susan Roces, took up BS Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at California Polytechnic University.

Dan and Julie met in UERM and married in 2003. They have a daughter, Bella, 2, and are expecting another, named Sophie, in February.

Denton also graduated from the Ateneo with a Biology degree and went to the UERM, graduating 30 years to the day when his father did. Interestingly enough, Denton is quite proficient with a variety of musical instruments and still dreams of a career as a songwriter.

It was after the whole SARS panic that Julie, Dan and

(continued on page 15)

Vacci Nation

The doctors of Immunizers Clinic provide some important points to ponder about adult vaccination.

5 Things Filipinos Should Know About Adult Immunization:

1. Vaccination is not just for infants and children. Adult vaccination is just as important, if not sometimes more.

2. Not all vaccines are needed by everyone. It is important to review your personal history, and find out which you need the most based on different factors such as age, occupation, hobbies, and others.

3. Economically speaking, it is more cost-effective to receive vaccination than the cost of treatment, hospitalization and loss of work productivity.

4. Vaccination is not as painful as it is perceived to

(continued on page 14)

SUDOKU

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

					2			
		6			4	5		
	7	1			8	3	6	
6	3	8						
				6				
						6	1	8
	9	4	5			2	7	
		2	3			9		
			1					

Difficulty Level ★★★★★ 1/07

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Answer to previous puzzle

9	1	3	8	6	7	5	2	4
7	4	5	2	9	1	8	6	3
8	2	6	3	5	4	1	9	7
2	3	9	7	8	5	4	1	6
5	6	4	1	3	9	7	8	2
1	7	8	6	4	2	3	5	9
3	8	7	9	1	6	2	4	5
4	9	1	5	2	3	6	7	8
6	5	2	4	7	8	9	3	1

Difficulty Level ★★★★

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The P100,000 Question (from page 5)

The path to financial success is usually dependent on the risks you are willing to take. You could head straight to the casino or a high stakes poker game a la James Bond—if you are that good or are willing to be laughed off the table.

Or you could invest your money into an already existing business. Colayco says he himself would invest in the stock market. But if P100,000 is all you really have, you are averse to risks and are interested mainly in passive investing, pooled funds might work for you. Approach the trust department of a major bank and ask about its UITFs or unit investment trust funds. Educate yourself on what they have to offer. Or you might want to invest in a Mutual Fund. The ICAP or Investment Company Association of the Philippines has some information on existing funds.

On the other hand, you might take a more entrepreneurial stance. If you are interested in starting a business, you have to know basic accounting. This, says Colayco, is crucial because you have to know at what point you are making money. In business, cash or, in this case, P100,000 is not your only asset. Examine what you have. Go into a business that you understand or are passionate about. That way, whether you gain or lose, you're doing what you love.

Otherwise, go for a proven franchise, one that has been in business for at least three years since this has a better residual value. Some franchises will even manage the business for you, and you can learn the business as you go along. Many are attracted by the food business since it promises high returns. The flip side is that it is very risky, especially if you do not know what you are doing. The point is, you cannot predict your success and you must be prepared for failure. This doesn't mean that you cannot dream big. The sky's the limit, but you have to plan for it. •

Mr. Colayco and his company holds seminars on personal finance. For more information, check KSK SMP Cooperative at www.kskcoop.com.

Clark hangs out with her dogs and her Pinoy "bah-kah-dah"

Ride, Sally, ride

triathletes whom she trains and hangs out with regularly. "I have one really good friend whose parents have kind of 'adopted' me," she says. "They're really lovely people and I've gone to movies, dinners and holidays with them even without my friend!" Though still single, Clark would like to settle down someday with someone who shares her values, goals, and of course, active lifestyle.

Whoever he is—a foreigner or Filipino—he's going to have to love the Philippines as much as she does. Upon returning from her annual trip to Australia a few years ago, Clark remembers driving down Edsa with this single thought running through her mind: "I can't wait to get home!" •

Music

By Eric S. Caruncho

The Old/New Beat Generation

These days, rock bands get all the hype.

But bubbling just beneath the surface is a new/old underground movement, composed of cells of hardcore DJs and producers. They bide their time in their bedroom studios, headphones on, bathed in the faint blue glow of their iBooks as they patiently sequence tracks and loop beats, waiting for the day when—come the revolution—they can emerge from the shadows and take their rightful place in the Philippine music scene.

Or not.

The last time "electronica"—the now quaint-sounding term for electronic dance music—reared its robotic head in the mainstream was in the late '90s, when the likes of Fatboy Slim and the Chemical Brothers crossed over from the clubs to the super-attenuated consciousness of the MTV generation. For a while there, it looked like forward-looking dance music was poised to take over the charts.

But electronica's reign proved to be short-lived. Like a virus, the genre was mutating into new sub-genres so fast that the music-consuming public couldn't keep up, and quickly lost interest. Within a couple of years, electronic music had retreated back to the clubs and lounges as the new flavor of the month—whiny pop punk (or emo lite)—edged it off the charts.

But its converts have kept the faith. Proof is "LOCAL//:e," a free compilation CD recently launched by a loose conglomeration of DJs and producers calling itself the "local electronica collective."

If nothing else, it proves that the local DJ scene is alive and well—it just hasn't landed in a reality TV show just yet.

True to its DJ roots "LOCAL//:e" is programmed like a vinyl LP, with "Side One" consisting of the more downtempo/lounge grooves by the likes of Silverfilter, Trip M, couchLab, Artstrong and Abdel Aziz, while "Side Two" contains the more dancefloor-oriented tracks by Suntheory, Funk Avy, Houseboy, TriboManila and Rubber Inc.

Right now, the CD is not for sale; it's being given away free at events by the local electronica collective. So if you're into this kind of thing, be on the lookout for their gigs.

Figure It Out

5.27 %: Percentage rise in the peso-dollar rate in 2006, from 52.61 to 49.84

184: Number of estimated fatalities from Typhoon Milenyo

2.1 million liters: Estimated amount of bunker oil carried by M/T Solar I when it sank on August 11 in the Guimaras Strait

100 %: Percentage of passengers saved in the December sinking of the ferry MB Brian off the coast of Batangas

19: Number of medals Filipinos won at the 15th Asian Games in Doha, Qatar, the Philippines' best finish since 1962

10.3 million: Estimated number of Filipinos tuned in to watch the third Manny Pacquiao-Erik Morales fight

Compiled by Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research

ROAD RULES

Tips for road safety from Prestige Cars BMW

1. Don't forget the basics - buckle your seatbelt, limit loose objects in your car and lock your doors. This is the most effective way to reduce vehicle-related injuries.

2. Keep your eyes on the road. Refrain from using your mobile phone, eating or reading while driving. Don't let extra items block your view of the road.

3. Keep your vehicle well-maintained. Visit an authorized dealership and have your car checked before a trip. BMW owners can take advantage of the extended service hours at Prestige Cars BMW. Simply call the customer service representative at 892-9630 to schedule an appointment.

4. Avoid driver fatigue on long journeys. Make sure you have plenty of sleep before a long drive. Take regular breaks—make time to stretch your legs or stop for refreshments. Share the driving with a traveling companion.

5. Keep emergency numbers in your mobile phone. Prestige Cars BMW extends roadside assistance to BMW owners 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The Prestige Cars BMW service team may be reached at 0917-8140394 or 892-8127.

Prestige Cars BMW is located along Pasong Tamo Extension on the Makati Automotive Row, and has long served as the home for all things BMW in Metro Manila's premier financial district. It offers a complete line of the latest models of brand new BMW vehicles and BMW Premium Selection/ Certified Pre Owned vehicles.

For further information, contact: Maricar C. Parco
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Facsimile 816-7325
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@prestigecarsbmw.com

Move It

IT'S January, and you've got no excuses left. Time for that most popular of New Year's resolutions: Get back in shape!

Not that it's a new concept; people have been battling their weight for eons, and the weapons have changed dramatically over time, as well. Today there's yoga and spinning and boxing and frisbee, but back in the Eighties, before knees started to give and low-impact became the wise choice, aerobics ruled.

It didn't hurt that the color-coordinated outfits were wild (remember Olivia Newton-John in "Physical"?) and the routines worthy of any disco dance floor. And being the ultimate group dynamic, aerobics were always perfect for public exhibitions, like this one for Heart Month in Manila, complete with catchy anti-fat slogans and leotards cut up to there. And a-one, and a-two, and...•

Vacci Nation (from page 11)

be. Also, side-effects that people worry about are very rare.

5. Many of the myths of old are just that—myths. You CAN take a bath after vaccination, you CAN eat and drink after most vaccines (except for a few), and you CAN work out and enjoy the night even right after receiving an injection.

5 Diseases Filipinos should be immunized against:

1. Hepatitis - It's ironic that citizens of other countries are made to get vaccinated from Hepatitis before traveling to the Philippines, and our own countrymen are not protected. As of today, only two of the Hepatitis viruses are vaccine-preventable. With the recent addition of Hepatitis B as part of routine childhood vaccination, more and more Filipinos are getting protected from Hepatitis B, which is a major cause of liver cancer. But this has only been a recent law and those who were born prior to this law taking effect, should look into being protected against this disease.

2. Typhoid - a food-borne disease which is a constant threat in our country and nearby Asian countries; the typhoid vaccine is renewable every four years

3. Influenza - Many often think of the flu as the common cough or cold, but it is more than that. Influenza is actually more debilitating especially those with other co-existing diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and chronic conditions. Even those who live with such patients should be vaccinated because by protecting themselves, they also protect the people they are taking care of.

4. Pneumonia - More important for the elderly; we take for granted that as we get older, our immune system is also not as strong as it used to be. Pneumonia is one of the leading causes of death and sickness in the Philippines. Although there are many causes of pneumonia, the vaccine protects you from the most common cause of this dangerous disease.

5. Measles, Mumps, Rubella - from a woman's perspective, one of the more delicate times of her life will be during her pregnancy. During this time, your baby's health is dependent on your health and protecting a mother against these diseases can spell the difference between a healthy newborn, and one with congenital defects.

V for Vaccination (from page 11)

Denton thought adult vaccination might be a cause they could take on. "Can you imagine? The adult vaccination rate in the Philippines is less than one percent," Denton says incredulously. "We've always envisioned a group that can provide vaccination for all, and although that dream's going to be an uphill climb, it's something definitely worth striving for."

Dan came up with the name, Denton the logo and "I cheered them on," says Julie. "After realizing that residency was not the next step for me, I found that I could focus on Immunizers full-time, with the benefit of being able to take care of Bella too. At the very least, I'd have a flexible schedule." It was Denton who asked Anne to join their team. "They needed somebody to help them with the operations of the clinic," says Anne. "I didn't know much about vaccination for adults or how to run a business, but he convinced me that anything can be learned. That was one thing I had to offer—I was willing to learn."

Aside from Immunizers, the group have their own ventures. Julie is managing The Health Cube, "which looks at medicine from all aspects: Preventive, Curative, Diagnostic, and Rehabilitative." Denton is involved with The Health Cube as well, but also runs, in his words, "a company that provides ambulatory electrocardiogram (ECG) services to doctors around the country."

Anne has the most exotic non-medical endeavor of the group: "My mother's family, the Narcisos, established La Moderna Bakery in Guagua. It is one of the oldest bakeries in Pampanga and still uses the traditional wood-fired oven or '*pugon*.'" The bakery is well known for its Kapampangan delicacies. Now on its 60th year, we have been expanding the business to San Fernando, Angeles and in Manila."

What unites them is Immunizers, of course, with each one having a distinct role. Dan is CEO, Julie is in charge of Finance, Denton handles Marketing and Anne is the Operations maven. All are immensely busy, but devoted to the idea that immunization can actually make a profound change in the life of the Filipino.

The team has established their clinic on Wilson St., San Juan. "Vaccination can be potentially life saving to the elderly who have chronic medical conditions and weak immune systems," Anne notes. "They need to be protected from the flu and pneumonia."

The challenge, they admit, is convincing most Filipino adults that they need further vaccinations. Says Dan: "Unlike having a disease, seeking medical help and spending for it once you have it, getting a vaccination is still seen as an unnecessary expense, when in fact, it costs very little compared to the health, time and expense one incurs once you get sick. Until the public is educated on the importance of preventive vaccination, we will be at a difficult vantage point convincing people that it is so important."

Keeping Immunizers running has been a challenge as well. Denton recalls how excited they were when they got their first patient. "It turned out that she was our first and only patient that whole week," he says. "But word got around and we've seen over 4,000 patients in less than two years." As word gets around and their clients bring in others, Immunizers has gotten steadily busier. "We're closing in on 10,000 doses already," Denton adds.

This is a medical mission but also a business that they plan to make profitable. "We are a professional organization with trained physicians providing services," Dan says. "Service is what makes us different and where our organization profits. Our service includes not only vaccination, but more importantly education regarding which vaccines you may need depending on your age, gender, concomitant diseases and the places you will be working in or traveling to."

Dan says that their vaccines are all manufactured abroad and imported from European countries, so they really do not have much control over the pricing. The costs vary depending on the disease the client is being vaccinated against. "A regular flu shot costs around P1,000 and this includes the service and the record keeping so we can remind you each year," Denton says. "Other vaccines like Hepatitis B shots need three doses that costs P1,000 per shot. One of the more expensive vaccines is for Hepatitis A, which cost P2,500. The benefit of these vaccines though is that they offer over 20 years to a lifetime of protection so you really get your money's worth. In the end, investing in protection is always better than paying for actually getting sick, and in the long run, a whole lot cheaper. •"

Immunizers Clinic is located at 226 Wilson Street, Greenhills, San Juan. To know what vaccines are best for you, you can talk to any of the Immunizers Doctors at 744-5552 or 744-5553, or 0917-5260829, or you can email info@immunizers.net.

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5. Be mindful of how food makes you feel. Eat foods that make you feel good and energized. Our bodies are like engines, and we run best on high quality natural fuels.

6. Think lifestyle and eating plan, not diet. Diet is something we go on and off. Lifestyle is long-term.

7. Start with small changes and add to them. If you have never exercised, start with 10 minutes a day of walking and build up. Add one serving of vegetable to each meal. Exchange the soft drink for diet soda, tea, or water.

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WOMEN POWER,
THE MOTO IDJ WAY

Aside from the gathering of the next-gens, celebrities, media peeps and fashionistas, this year's Motorola iDJ Series also became a venue for women power to be showcased.

In the Media Mixology leg, showcased were the different attitudes in musicality. With Karla Alindahao's hip-hop and Brit punk; Bea Constantino's funky, ambient and cathartic music; and Tals Diaz's nova electro-rock clash, the night became more vivid and vibrant.

Michelle Pamintuan's fun music and Manika Yujuico's free flowing style of music made them the true icons of the Next-Gen.

Phoemela Barranda's sexy house; Charmaine Palermo's loving hip hop; Bubbles Paraiso's energetic hip hop; Tessa Dragon's anything and everything surely made them the stars of the Fashion Mix-Match. Celebrating music in Celebrity Spin style, Sam Oh rendered music in RnB bias while Mich Dulce went for indie rock, punk and riot girl.

For 4 Saturday nights, these women competed and ruled the club scenes of the Metro, spinning their music using the MOTORKR E2 that is equipped with Bluetooth technology. It is this feature that gave birth to the iDJ concept, having amateur DJs play songs using the MOTOROKR E2 in a wild and wicked competition that only Motorola could put together.

Wherever you are, whenever you want, the MOTOROKR E2 delivers a distinctive music experience. Designed with music in mind, the MOTOROKR E2 features are optimized with dedicated music controls on the side and front, plus a standard 3.5mm stereo headset jack and up to 2GB of removable memory for storing all your favorite tracks, pictures, videos and more.

Hear them roar! iDJs Tals Diaz, Karla Alindahao and Bea Constantino with MOTO'S Mari Litonjua

iDJ hits the runway with Phoem Barranda

Bea Constantino chalks it up

Rated iDJ: Sam Oh puts the MOTOROKR to the test and is loving every second of it!

Spinning with a phone in a ball gown? Tessa Dragon has been there and done that

Tals Diaz ups the ante

Strike a pose, there's nothing to it for Bubbles Paraiso

Mich Dulce just fluxes it

Manika Yujuico spinning serenely

Michelle Pamintuan does double time

Red-hot Charmaine Palermo

What's up, Karla?